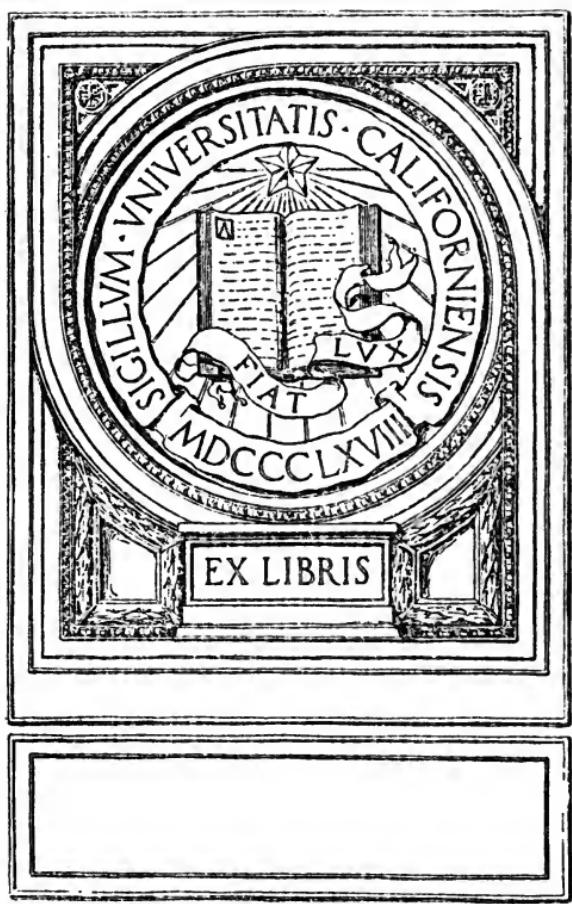


THROUGH RUSSIA
IN WAR-TIME by
C. HEMINGHAM COXWELL





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THROUGH RUSSIA
IN WAR-TIME

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

CHRONICLES OF MAN AN ESSAY IN VERSE

654 pp. 6/- net.

"It brings into play no small amount of learning and of thought."—*Scotsman*.

"A monumental work displaying a wide scholarship."—*Edinburgh Evening News*.

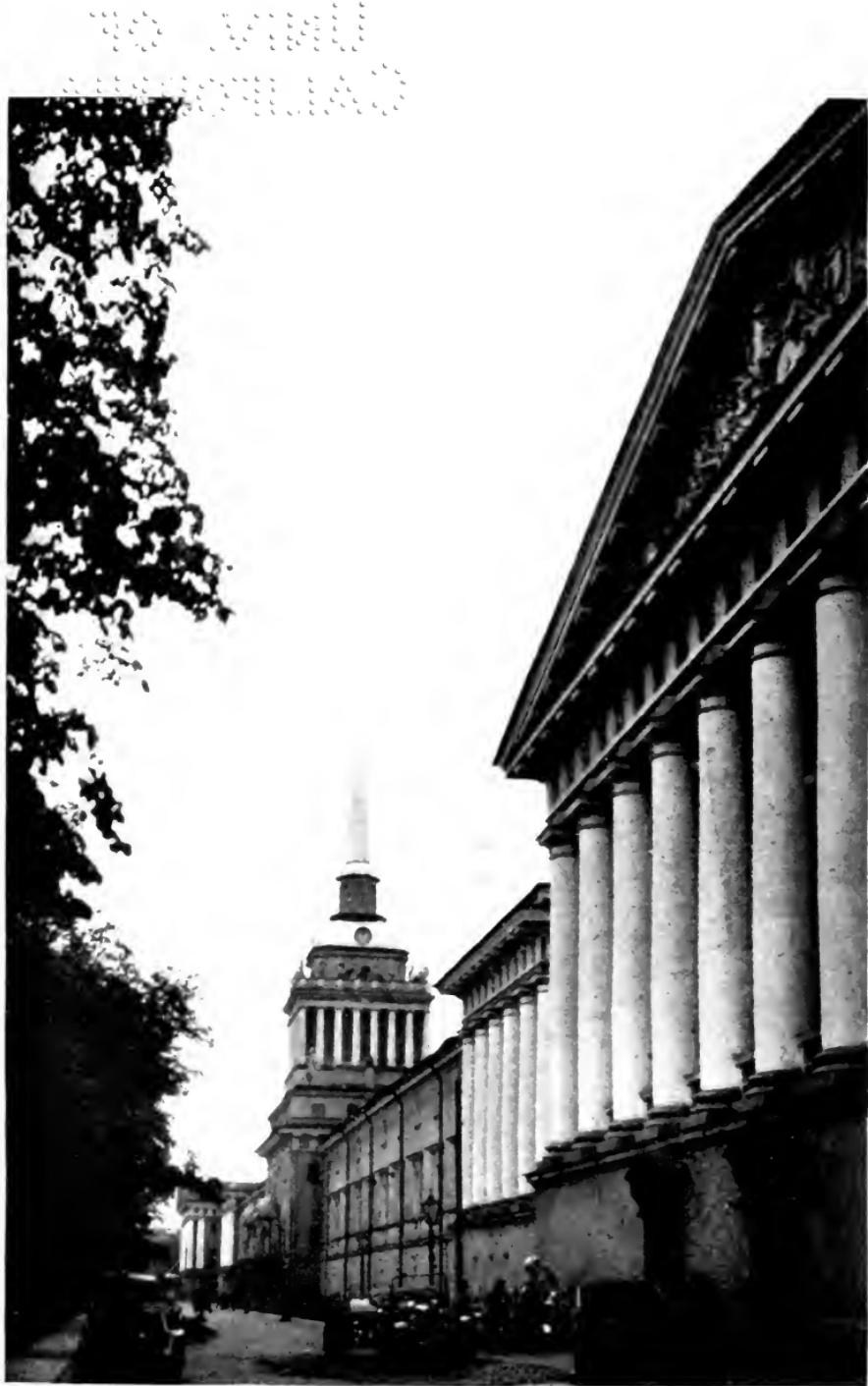
"A work which recounts the whole story of man's evolution, and strings on one thread of philosophical argument the details of all his most important exploits in every field of thought and action."—*Daily News*.

"One of the best Chronicles in the Book, delineating the spirit of History."—*Western Daily Mercury*.

"Scenes from the life of Egypt, Persia, Hindustan, Cathay, Nipon, Greece, Rome, and Islam, under each of which there is some powerful descriptive writing."—*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*.

WATTS & CO., 17 JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET.





THE ADMIRALTY. PETROGRAD.

Frontispiece.

THROUGH RUSSIA
IN WAR-TIME *By*
C. FILLINGHAM COXWELL

WITH 55 ILLUSTRATIONS AND A ROUTE MAP



LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN LTD.
ADELPHI TERRACE

DR 262
C 6

First published in 1917

NO. VIII
AMERICAN

(All rights reserved)

PREFACE

ALTHOUGH fully alive to the numerous defects of this slight narrative, I trust its appearance is justified. Only long residence, which I have not enjoyed, can qualify to speak authoritatively of a vast and unique country. Nevertheless personal experience has its worth, and there is widespread and growing interest in all that pertains to Russia. Recent stupendous political events in Petrograd must still further compel attention to a land valiantly striving after internal reforms, while taking a doughty part in the world's battle for an enlightened civilization. Here and there I have gathered a little help, which I beg gratefully to acknowledge, from the writings of Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace and Messrs. A. Platonovich Englehardt, E. H. Palmer, Michell, E. Nisbet Bain, and Rambaud. The illustrations are from photographs taken by me, mostly in the course of my journey, but a few during a previous winter.

C. F. C.

419967

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	5
CHAPTER	
I. THE APPROACH	13
II. ARCHANGEL	20
III. VÒLOGDA	29
IV. PETROGRAD	40
V. MOSCOW	68
VI. MOSCOW (<i>continued</i>)	84
VII. THROUGH KURSK TO KÌEV	101
VIII. ODESSA AND A VOYAGE UP THE DNEIPER	111
IX. THE CRIMEA	121
X. KERTCH AND THE KUBÀN	137
XI. VLADIKAVKÀZ TO KASBÈK	146
XII. KASBÈK AND ONWARDS	163
XIII. TIFLÌS	181
XIV. BAKÙ	192
XV. DERBÈNT	197
XVI. PETRÒVSK	202
XVII. ASTRAKHAN—THE KALMUCKS	211

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVIII. A JOURNEY TO URÀLSK—THE KHIRGHÌZ	229
XIX. THE VOLGA	248
XX. KAZÀN AND NÌZHNI NÒVGOROD	261
XXI. PETROGRAD AGAIN	272
XXII. FINLAND	281
XXIII. LAPPS	296
XXIV. HOMEWARDS	305

ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE ADMIRALTY, PETROGRAD	<i>Frontispiece</i>
FACING PAGE	
MAP OF ROUTE	13
ARCHANGEL. TRÖITZKI PROSPÈKT	20
ARCHANGEL. CATHEDRAL OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL .	22
VÖLOGDA. THE RIVER	33
PETROGRAD. KAZÀN CATHEDRAL	49
PETROGRAD. ST. ISAAC'S CATHEDRAL	55
PETROGRAD. STATUE OF PETER THE GREAT	56
MOSCOW. THE SACRED PIGEONS. THE RED SQUARE	70
MOSCOW. THE GATE OF THE REDEEMER	73
MOSCOW. THE GREAT BELL	74
MOSCOW. THE KREMLIN	76
MOSCOW. CATHEDRAL OF ST. BASIL	78
MOSCOW. A COSSACK	81
MOSCOW. A STREET SCENE	87
MOSCOW. A GORODOVÌ	90
MOSCOW. THE DONSKÙI CONVENT	95
MOSCOW. THE SÌMONOV MONASTERY	99

Illustrations

FACING PAGE

KIEV. A RUSSIAN POPE	107
ALÙSHTA	130
BÀKTCHEE SERÀI. WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN A TELÈGA	132
BÀKTCHEE SERÀI. THE MUEZZIN'S CALL TO PRAVER	134
COSSACK WOMEN	142
BIDDING FAREWELL TO COSSACK SOLDIERS	144
A STREET IN VLADIKAVKÀZ	148
OSSETIANS. THE GEORGIAN MILITARY ROAD	148
MOUNT KASBÈK	157
KASBÈK	163
SION	165
GEORGIAN AND OSSETIAN MAIDENS	166
ASCENDING THE KRESTÒVY PASS	168
THE DESCENT TO GUDÀUR	170
ANANÙR	175
MTZKHET	178
NEAR TIFLÌS	180
TIFLÌS. THE MAIDÀN	183
SABUNTCHI, NEAR BAKÙ	194
DERBÈNT. THE CITADEL	199
PETRÒVSK. LESGHIANS	205
PETRÒVSK. LESGHIAN CHILDREN	207
BALDA. KALMUCKS	218
BALDA. KALMUCK CAMP	220

Illustrations

	FACING PAGE
KALMUCKI-BAZAR. KALMUCKS . . . . .	. . . . . 224
KALMUCKI-BAZAR. LAMA-BUDDHIST TEMPLE . . . . .	. . . . . 226
URALSK. KHIRGHIZ . . . . .	. . . . . 241
URALSK. TATAR DWELLINGS ON THE STEPPE . . . . .	. . . . . 241
URALSK. KHIRGHIZ . . . . .	. . . . . 242
URALSK. KHIRGHIZ ENCAMPMENT . . . . .	. . . . . 244
THE VOLGA. A LANDING STAGE . . . . .	. . . . . 252
GEORGIAN PEDLAR ON A VOLGA STEAMER . . . . .	. . . . . 258
PETROGRAD. A MOUJIK . . . . .	. . . . . 276
JUKASJÄRVI. A LAPP WOMAN . . . . .	. . . . . 297
LAKE TORNEA. A LAPP WIGWAM . . . . .	. . . . . 300
NEAR LAKE TORNEA. A LAPP . . . . .	. . . . . 303



RUSSIA



MAP OF ROUTE.

Through Russia in War-time

CHAPTER I

THE APPROACH

IN the spring of the war year 1915 I was about to terminate a brief visit to New York, when the horror of the *Lusitania* struck the world dumb and presaged further calamities on the ocean. Almost immediately a fresh route to Europe was announced by way of Archangel, hearing of which I could not resist a mild adventure. An opportunity to increase a meagre knowledge of Russia was not to be despised, so I engaged a passage, intending to visit Petrograd, and travel across Finland and Scandinavia homewards.

Our vessel, of eight thousand tons, left Brooklyn on the 22nd of May, after a severe thunderstorm. Never was a more favourable voyage: no bad weather troubled us, and no disaster filled our minds with gloom.

To speak generally, the captain, officers, and crew were subjects of the Tsar, but a few of the men probably hailed from Norway or Denmark. The saloon passengers numbered only four besides myself. Accompanied by his wife, a young

Through Russia in War-time

American engineer was journeying to Petrograd in order that he might extend an already successful career; while a genial Russian doctor from New York hastened to serve in his nation's Army, where his medically qualified wife, now with him, courageously intended to act as a nurse. Moreover, in the second class, were natives of various parts of the Russian Empire, perhaps a dozen ladies and gentlemen, some of the latter anxious to take up arms. Lastly, the third class afforded accommodation for several hundred passengers, composed mostly of men called up for military duty, or such as wished to woo fortune once more in the land of their birth.

Merely to live on board a foreign vessel provided a certain novelty, which chiefly showed itself at mealtimes, and, with what I hope was praiseworthy effort, I began to ask a steward, more or less intelligibly, in Russian for my ham and eggs and coffee, and minded not his smile. At the luncheon hour we sat down, in a saloon pleasantly placed forward and high, to a table prepared for the 'zakùska,' namely, loaded with smoked or soused fish, sardines, cold veal, ham, chicken, goose, tongue, sausage, cucumber, cheese, preserved cranberries or apples—good things to be partaken of generously. Then arrived, in order, a cup of bouillon, hot fish and potatoes and an entrée, while, in a high glass, tea, with lemon and sugar, competed for popularity with Danish lager beer. Agreeable conversation failed not, often led by our captain, who spoke several languages and had travelled widely. We

The Approach

again rallied at afternoon tea, and later for a substantial dinner, where the preliminary repast was omitted. Chess, played by nearly all, brought us together in the smoking-room, on a trip which in everything continued delightfully informal. But, of course, discussions were not infrequent, and topics ranged from the terrible war to philosophy. Each day, till we neared Norway, our wireless operators, both Englishmen, favoured us with a bulletin of considerable length, and universal confidence in the success of the Allies' arms was well sustained. But, before the voyage ended, ill news from Poland and Galicia naturally produced some unhappiness. The grievous blow struck at Russia's fortunes by lack of a necessary stock of war munitions was severely felt, and, with concurrent reports of strikes in England, our discussions grew once or twice less calm. I foretold that all labour troubles among a free, democratic people, unwilling at once to abandon trade customs, would swiftly cease. I dwelt on the noble deeds of the British Navy, which was carrying out its supreme task with complete efficacy, and pointed out that, of the valiant millions flocking to our Army under a system of voluntary enlistment, already hundreds of thousands had suffered in the contest against outrageous militarism and Teutonic domination. Our talk was in English, which all spoke easily, and in dialectic the Russian doctor displayed skill, showing himself able to handle abstruse subjects, though he had studied our language but a year or two.

Of the lesser races met with in travelling none

Through Russia in War-time

makes a more striking impression than the Armenian, and one at least of that stock was on board. Blessed with a very aquiline nose, an enormous black moustache, and gentle dark eyes, he spoke in right manly way of his warlike purpose. Every day his picturesque appearance—for he had a fine taste in colour and style of garments—more completely won my admiration. Alas ! when, summoning courage, I expressed a wish to point my camera in his direction, he retired for half an hour to his cabin, and then came forth in the garb of a sedate and worthy New York citizen !

It was enchanting for a period of twenty-four hours to run along the southern coast of Iceland ; and, as if our pleasure were Heaven's special care, the sun shone on that occasion for the first time since the date of our American farewells. It is true we were something under a score of miles away, but the snow and the glaciers glistened on the high mountain-sides. Distant trawlers, between the shore and ourselves, steamed busily, and a 'tramp' steamer, probably laden with flax for a Scotch port, passed close. On our right a small submerged rocky island, as the waves broke over it, looked for all the world like a whale spouting. It was well that we passed this spot in daylight. Naturally every one gave attention to the behaviour of the sun. For the space of three whole days reading was easy in the music-room ; but the great ball, making at midnight on June 3rd, at 71 degrees north latitude and $3\frac{1}{2}$ degrees above the horizon, an intermittent majestic display, gleamed forth less remarkably than

The Approach

when, later in the voyage, as a ruddy, glowing sphere, more solid than ever I saw him before, he sank for a while slowly out of sight. It was strangely uncanny to feel, during seventy or eighty hours, that the heavenly body from which earth sprang kept always above in view potentially, for, even in fine weather, clouds are apt to obscure the disc at its lowest. One day, at noon, the great light shone high behind us, and I thought of the beautiful Babylonish myth, according to which Tamar follows her beloved Attys through the realms of darkness, and having successively at seven portals removed a garment to propitiate the queen of the infernal regions, rescues her lover that he may pursue again his radiant course in the heavens. But in these northerly regions perhaps some legendary pair lives free of troublous experiences and enjoys unbroken bliss.

Our ship steered a course bringing us within a few miles of North Cape, where many high and bold headlands, whose black sides were here and there relieved with snowy white, successively presented themselves. Then came a granite Murman coast with an ugly, bare, level surface, possibly several hundred feet above the beach. Hereabouts some of us experienced a little thrill, since afar a large floating cork, loosed from a fisherman's net, appeared for a moment not unlike the top of a submarine's periscope. Nor should we have formed a contemptible object for the enemy, as cased aeroplanes strewed our deck, and, if rumour spoke truly, much material for the manufacture of deadly

Through Russia in War-time

missiles lay stored below. But anxiety had been slight, since most of us remembered that our distance from Germany was great, and that the northern coasts were inhospitably disposed towards that hard-striking Power. Nevertheless, several months later an engagement occurred at this spot between an undersea craft of the enemy and two Russian destroyers. Happily the latter were victorious. Suddenly, and at last, the weather grew stormy, and now the vessel rolled, yet she behaved well under stress, from the north-east, of enormous waves, which, as their white crests overtook us, afforded at the stern the finest possible spectacle of seething commotion. But, after a day and night of such grandeur, our journey had ended : we ran between flat shores in sheltered waters, where the chief objects of interest were outward-bound Norwegian ships with, upon their sides, staringly painted signs of neutral nationality. Before three o'clock next morning our vessel entered the Dvinà, and in broad daylight, for the sun was already fairly high, I stood upon deck, inwardly stirred by the transition from boundless ocean to the mighty territory of Russia. Occasionally some log-houses or a church of the simplest architecture attracted my attention, but the absolutely level and unbroken expanse of land suggested vastness, which idea was strengthened by the great width of the river and the enormous floating masses of timber, with here and there a steam tug in attendance. A diminutive motor launch, carrying two or three gendarmes, kept pace, till finally we drew in by a quay in front of the

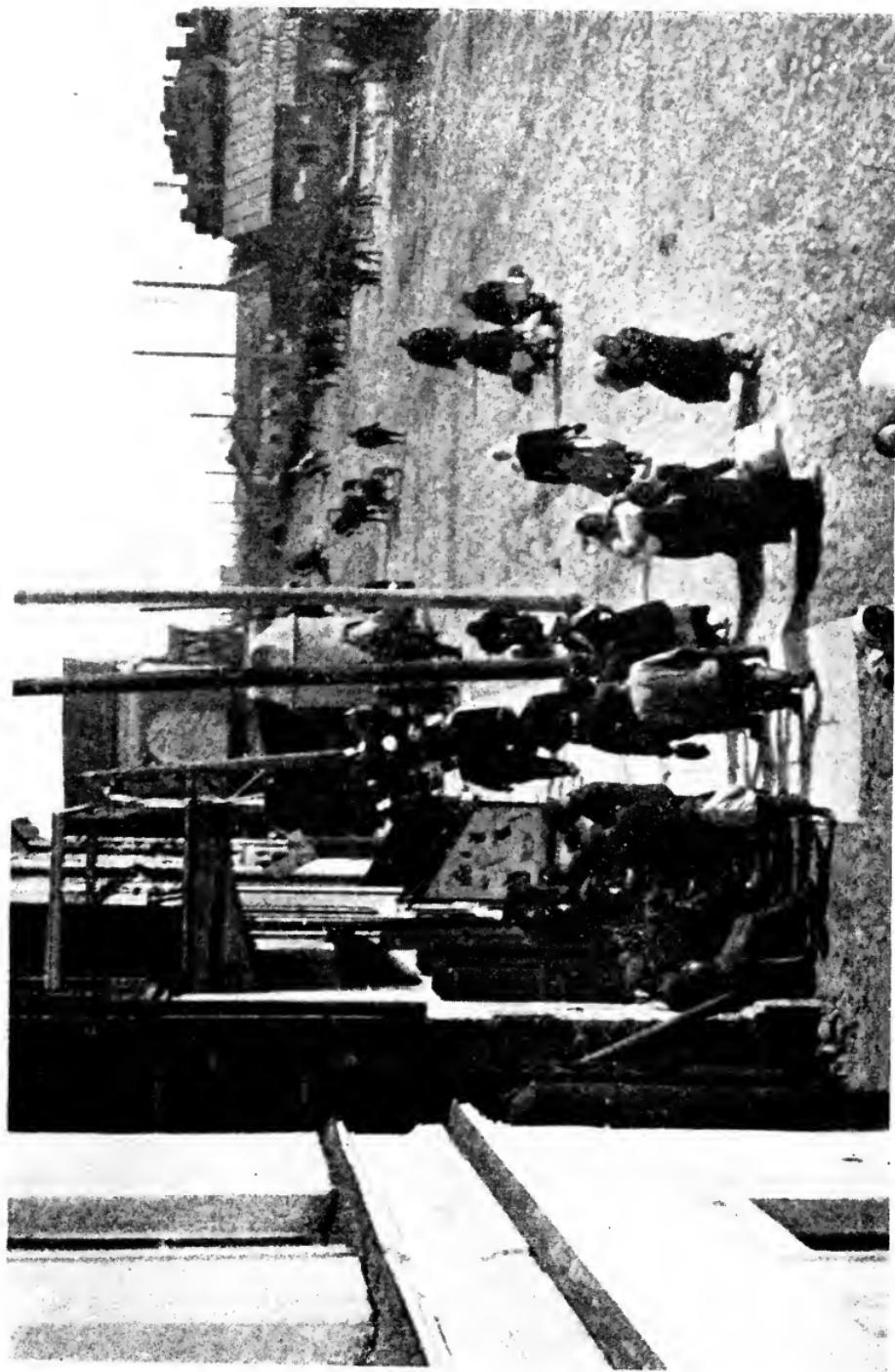
The Approach

beautiful blue and gilded cupolas adorning Archangel's cathedral. Already several uniformed officials had boarded us, but now an uncompromising soldier stood with fixed and gleaming bayonet at the gangway, while various energetic gentlemen appeared who represented the ship's owners, and docile passengers thronged the decks, anxious to depart. Ere long I was summoned into the saloon and the presence of the general commanding the harbour, an officer of important bearing, not devoid of bonhomie. Finding that, although not engaged on any business enterprise, I was ignorant of the Russian tongue, and hearing from those who had examined it that my luggage was above suspicion, he graciously permitted me to land.

CHAPTER II

ARCHANGEL

WITH delight, increased by novelty and unmarred by any feeling of helplessness, I stepped on to the quay. At once two men demanded sixty kopecks and, having received that sum, gave me a formal acknowledgment. But their efforts proved unsuccessful with the next passenger, for when he was about to hand them, at their request, three times as much, one of the ship's officers shouted that no payment was necessary. And now came an opportunity for effort, perseverance, and action, to supplement the indifferent aid of moujiks stolidly standing at the dock gates. Having obtained, after perhaps a quarter of an hour, a dròschky, so tiny that it would scarcely hold my steamer trunk, I maintained, despite ceaseless and violent swaying, a precarious position in it until the isvòstchik drew up before the Tròitzkaya Gostìnnitza or hotel. This is situated in the main street, the Tròitzki Prospekt, and from a broad veranda I looked down on the traffic. Numerous peasants, and but a few vehicles, could be seen. Hirsute, tall, strongly built men, dressed in dark cloth caps, jackets, trousers, and topboots, paced the cobble-stoned roadway or lounged idly.



THE TROITZKI PROSPÈKT. ARCHANGEL.



-

o
o

)

Archangel

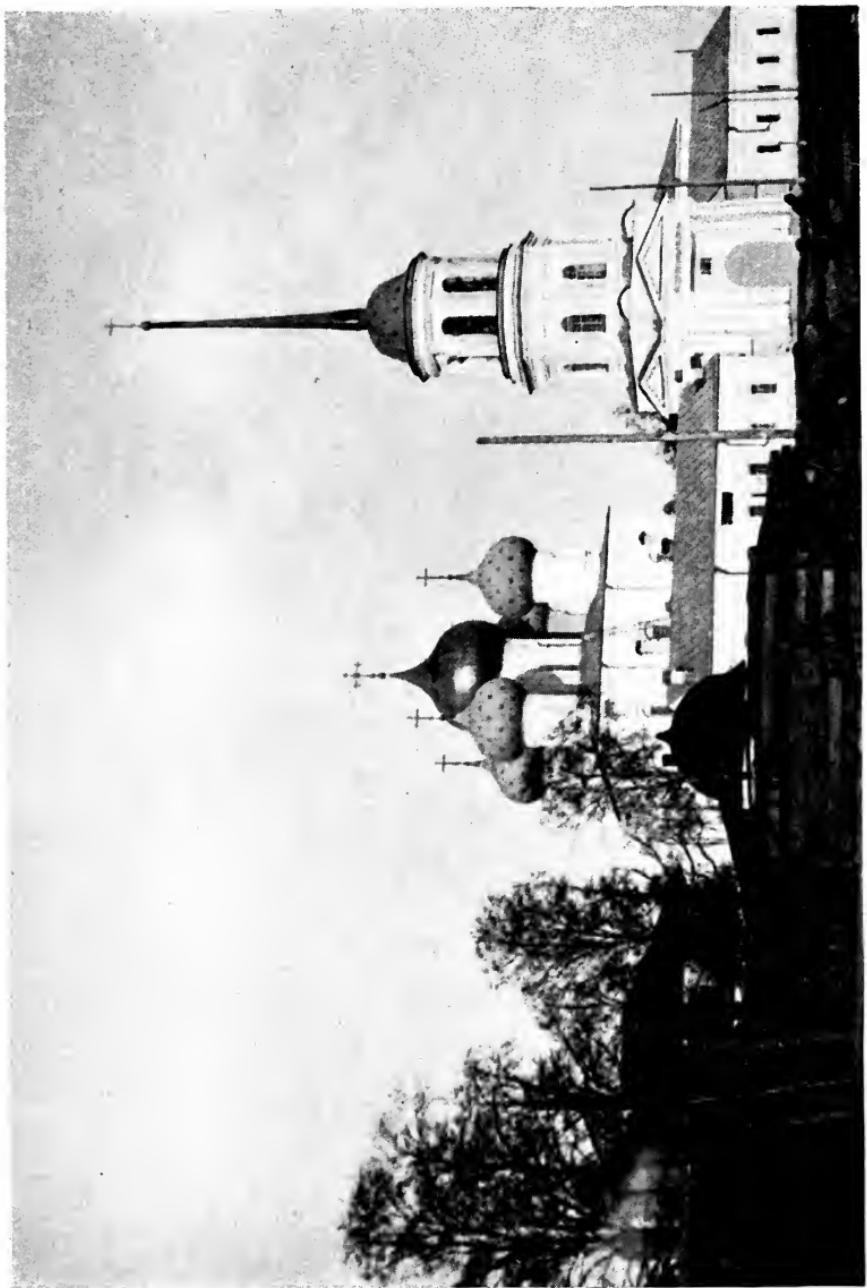
on the pavement. But the womenfolk, with kerchiefs on their heads, and wearing substantial and unattractive mantles and skirts, moved along ceaselessly, carrying over their shoulders or in their hands heavy bundles or baskets, while their plain, patient faces harmonized well with strong bodies doubtless accustomed to continuous toil. The hotel was barrack-like, and, ascending by mistake the staircase of a subsidiary portion containing 'kòmnaty' or apartments, I wandered about in some difficulty. However, rescue came from an obliging acquaintance made on the voyage. In the dining-room, an efficient, if somewhat slovenly, waiter served me, at a charge of a rouble, a meal consisting of bouillon, 'zhàrenaya barànyeena' (roast mutton) and 'morðzhenoye' (an ice). Nor was the cooking to be despised. Then I stepped into the street and gained some notion of this remote town. The unimposing main road runs parallel with the river, but behind it are pleasanter streets set at right angles to one another. The houses are low and, except in the centre of the town, mostly on one floor and built of logs. Curious on the subject, I examined an unfinished habitation, and found that the crevices between the logs were filled with a coarse felt. To the north, at one end of Archangel, some public gardens with a primitive Kursaal strive to relieve the general dreariness. Near by stand the Governor's house, a Customs Department, and large offices. Thence, walking southward, one comes to the Cathedral and another church, busy quays, great vessels lying in the stream, a red-brick building

Through Russia in War-time

containing public baths ; then to some ferry-boats and an untidy foreshore lined with small shops and stores, to certain shipping offices and wooden booths, and finally, at a distance of about a mile from the centre of the town, to the convent of Saint Michael the Archangel. The cupolas of this sacred edifice, dating from 1637, are really beautiful, which is more than can be said of all such structures in this land of domes, towers, and bells. However, the existence of ugly things makes us prize the lovely ones. Here, the eye is allured by white walls and a high turret which, surmounted by a gilded cupola, forms a central object among other white turrets topped by cupolas of similar exquisite lines, but painted blue and adorned with golden stars.

How piously minded are the Russian folk ! In the fifteenth century two holy monks, settling in the distant and lonely Solovètski Islands of the White Sea (they are to be reached from Archangel), drew others of like mind to a social and communal mode of life. Later a boyàr, who had been a friend of the young Prince afterwards known as Ivàn the Terrible, powerfully assisted the fortunes and development of the Solovètski Monastery. As if foreseeing troubles, the monks made the place into a stronghold, erected towers and pierced the walls with embrasures, so that, when Nikon the Patriarch introduced his reforms into liturgy and sacred ceremonies, the fraternity were able to rebel, and even for nine years resist all military attack, though, at last overcome, many of them met an evil fate. The churches of the Monastery are possessed of

CATHEDRAL OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL. ARCHANGEL.





Archangel

rich treasures, and if one may judge from a picture, present to approaching visitors an astonishing spectacle, a veritable feast of beautiful cupolas. In summer numerous pilgrims travel from Archangel to the islands in the monks' own steamers.

Walking back, I peered into dark recesses of small wooden stalls standing beside the road. The shutters, let down by day, form a counter where can be dispensed fish or sausage, 'agoûrtsi' (gherkins) or kvas, a refreshing drink usually made from soaked and fermenting rye bread. Other trade is carried on thus, as in open places in our own Stratford-on-Avon and Whitechapel. Near a roundabout stood a wax-works thronged with moujiks. Within, a naval engagement of miniature clockwork models gave the beholders pleasure greater than that afforded by life-size effigies of various Tsars in gorgeous habiliments, but was in turn surpassed as an attraction by some very horrible figures. Who could believe that a designer would make a speciality of hideous tortures inflicted upon a woman's breast? Here, side by side, were half a dozen life-size wax torsos, showing with repulsive realism how fiendishly torment could be, and possibly has been, inflicted. I am loath to believe that such an exhibition revealed anything of the soul of the northern moujik, thus ghoulishly offered well-executed studies in cruelty.

Archangel has an interesting historical record. The Norsemen, and especially Othere, as described by King Alfred the Great, came hither on trading expeditions. Then, long afterwards, in the time of Queen Mary, Sir Richard Chancellor, captain of

Through Russia in War-time

the *Bonaventure*, landing at the mouth of the Dvinà, exhibited much courage and enterprise. Travelling to Moscow, he obtained from Ivàn the Terrible valuable trading rights for his countrymen. Next season he regained his ship and sailed homewards. Then the Muscovy Company was formed, and an English factory rose in Archangel, while, for the first time, Russia won an ocean outlet for her commerce.

Thirty years later Sir Jerome Horsey was well treated as he journeyed to this northern port. "New victual and provision were given him upon the river Dwinà at every town by the king's officers, being one thousand miles in length. When he came to the new castle called Archangel, he was received of the Duke Knez Vasili Andrewich Isvenogorodsky by the Emperor's commission into the Castle, gunners being set in rankes after their use, where he was sumptuously feasted."¹

Feodor Ivànowich, Emperor, spoke thus in 1586: "So likewise I have gratified them with their house at the sea haven, and we have commanded that they shal not cary their goods from thence to the new castle of St. Michael the archangel, but shall arrive, and doe as they have done heretofore with their wares at that their house, and shall unlade their commodities, even there at their house, without interruption."

Lord Burghley sent greeting in 1591, "To the right honourable my very good Lord, the Lord Borìs Feòdorwich, Master of the horses to the great and

¹ Hakluyt's "Voyages."

Archangel

mighty Emperour of Russia, Lieutenant of Cazan and Astracan," and complained, "at the last coming of our merchants to the port of St. Michael the Archangel, where the mart is holden, their goods were taken by the Emperour's officers for his Highness service at such rates as the said officers were disposed to set on them so farre under their value, that the merchants could not assent to accept of, which being denied, the sayd officers restrained them of all further traffique for the space of three weekes, by which means they were compelled to yeald unto their demaund how unwillingly soever."

So did Lord Burghley his duty, and we are told that the English Ambassador at the Court of Ivàn the Terrible bore himself valiantly and with proud independence in moments of considerable personal hazard.

The English merchant adventurers had a settlement higher up the river, also residences opposite the Tròitzki cathedral. Entering this structure, and mounting to the upper church, as the worshippers, including many military officers, descended the broad staircase, I was yet not too late to witness a minor ceremony. The interior, richly ornamented with ikòns, and without seats, for a Russian congregation stands or kneels, soon emptied itself, and then, attired in handsome vestments, a priest with, as usual, beautifully kept long locks and full beard, a sight of which made me almost regret the modern use of scissors on men's heads, held a service. In a rich and deep voice, he read from a sacred volume supported upon a young man's shoulders. The

Through Russia in War-time

latter at times, relieved of his burden, prostrated himself so that his forehead touched the floor. A little way off, a lay clerk chanted responses in tones even more magnificent than the reader's, but instrumental music had no more part in this simple ceremony than it ever has in the rites of a Greek-Russian church. I noticed that the names Alexander Ivànovitch were frequently pronounced by the priest and, on inquiry, learned afterwards from an acquaintance, that the ceremony was possibly one of prayers for the young man's father or brother.

Near the entrance of this upper church is a large wooden cross, the handiwork of Peter the Great, a benefactor of Archangel in the early years of his reign. But the most famous of Russian Tsars, whose devotion to shipbuilding so admirably suited his country's needs, giving as ever free play to his boldness and genius, turned his love to St. Petersburg. He drew off workmen to the new capital, and materially aided its development by taxing imports and exports of the northern harbour. But now Archangel must look forward to a fresh rival. At the port of Ekaterìna, or Alexandròvsk, on the Murman coast, the ocean never freezes, for on the northern shores of Kola, so richly supplied with fish that the highest price of cod in ten years was only two shillings per thirty-six pounds, the weather, owing to access of the Gulf Stream, is comparatively mild, even if huge masses of snow often fill clefts in the hills. During two winter months the natural illumination at Alexandròvsk is only that of the beautiful Northern Lights ; but, courageously and

Archangel

with ceaseless determination, Russia's administrators are constructing a railway which, passing through forest and swamps, over tundras, or moss-grown wilds, past granite regions once visited by glaciers, will finally give the Empire a continual outlet for water-borne commerce. Yet in the lower latitude of Archangel, situated, as it is, but two degrees without the Arctic circle, the conditions of life are not altogether favourable. Only three hours of full light cheer its inhabitants in the depth of winter, a state of things which is not compensated by length of summer days. One evening (in early June), after I had enjoyed my first experience of genuine Russian talent for comedy, slightly marred by the evening costume of a toréador, who trod the stage in a tall silk hat, dinner jacket, plush breeches, and yellow gaiters, I was able to walk home in bright daylight at ten o'clock. At the same hour men still thronged the neighbourhood of a roundabout, and gendarmes, numerous as ever, stood among them. What a different sight met my gaze next morning ! Patiently sitting upon the street kerb were, in a row, sixty or seventy peasant women improvising a market with the aid of their baskets. The men, too, toil hard. Great sawmills hint at the district's wealth, huge yards full of tar and pitch barrels speak of forest industries, while an extensive trade in fish and flax indicates further resources of this far-away town, whose shops are mostly inferior to those of a large English village, and whose streets, except the principal ones, remain quite unpaved. The traveller, sympathizing with a population oppressed by climate,

Through Russia in War-time

environment, and certain past historic influences, and recognizing that he has peeped into the life of masses still ignorant, superstitious, and unfit for any but a slight measure of constitutional liberty, realizes that he has here witnessed conditions akin to those of the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER III

VÒLOGDA

DEPARTURE from Archangel began with a preliminary ferry trip, entailing delay outside a wretched office, but gendarmes showed themselves helpful, and at last, despite the throng of peasants, baggage had been weighed, tickets paid for, and permission obtained to step from the pier. The little steamboat reached a spot at a considerable distance away on the opposite bank of the Dvinà, where carriages for Petrograd awaited travellers' pleasure. But after a few miles of progress on the single line of rails, then in process of being doubled, we drew up at a station provided with a 'booffyèt,' and here the lateness of the Moscow train kept us back for several hours. At first, in desolate surroundings, the vegetation was extremely scanty, consisting of occasional scrubby fir-trees, shamefacedly claiming a place on marshy soil. Then, as we moved farther, always over an interminable plain, trees of the same species became both taller and more numerous, while a few of lighter green spoke of spring. Finally we entered the wild, dark, and gloomy forests which dominate almost the whole route. Beautiful silver birch, straight of stem and attaining a great height, or

Through Russia in War-time

graceful pines, or immense Christmas-trees, were grouped together for separate stretches of hundreds of yards, even miles, and formed the nearly invariable outlook. It is not easy to occupy a place opposite a fellow-traveller for twenty-six hours without exchanging remarks, nor, when in a foreign land, without disclosing one's nationality. Therefore I felt relieved when a suspicious gentleman, who might have been a surveyor, for he showed me a pocket rule—of English make, had his doubts concerning my harmlessness relieved by a new-comer, a Russian-American. This man, having travelled on board ship with me, not only asserted that I was an English 'tourist,' but explained that the third column of my Anglo-Russian phrase book, far from being German, was merely a phonetic and necessary rendering of Russian in English characters. Later on, here and there, a substantial log-hut appeared beside the track ; but the chief break in the scenery was caused by stations, where, behind swing doors, or outside at little open stalls, such nourishment as three boiled eggs, or bread and cheese, or slices of sausage were purchasable at a counter for a few kopecks. A glass of tea was easily obtained, and bottles of milk could be got from peasant women standing patiently with baskets on their arm. In such a wilderness the arrival of the train is the day's event, so the population generally congregated on the platform, and the men, as usual with impassive faces, bushy beards, and rather long hair parted in the middle under high cloth peaked caps, wore short red calico shirts left outside trousers and confined by,

Vòlogda

a belt. As for the women, their attire was a kerchief, sometimes bright, tied under the chin, dark heavy garments, and, like the men, they revealed top-boots.

After we had journeyed perhaps a hundred miles from Archangel a horse came into view, and I think at something like the same distance farther on a glimpse of a cow rewarded my persevering search for signs of animal life. Travelling was not uncomfortable, for an under-conductor brought glasses of tchai, and at night-time he raised berths above either seat, so that, if necessary, four persons could lie down in each compartment of a corridor carriage.

Despite rain, I arrived at Vòlogda in a buoyant frame of mind, for I hoped here to learn something of a second provincial town, and, having given the name of the chief hotel to an isvòstchik, I soon found myself in the centre of the place. Alas ! the Gostìnnitza being full, it was my fate to seek accommodation at three other inns unsuccessfully. But, by good fortune, I remembered the Russian designation of Furnished Apartments, and eventually found some where I could be received at seven o'clock—that is, in the course of five hours. It was a strange experience, but the Russians are a kindly folk, and a genially polite young student, coming out into the passage when I arrived, offered to help me through the medium of French and German in case I experienced any sort of difficulty. Having expressed my gratitude, I preferred to blunder on alone, being convinced that the only way to master useful and necessary Russian forms of speech is at all costs to practise them. The

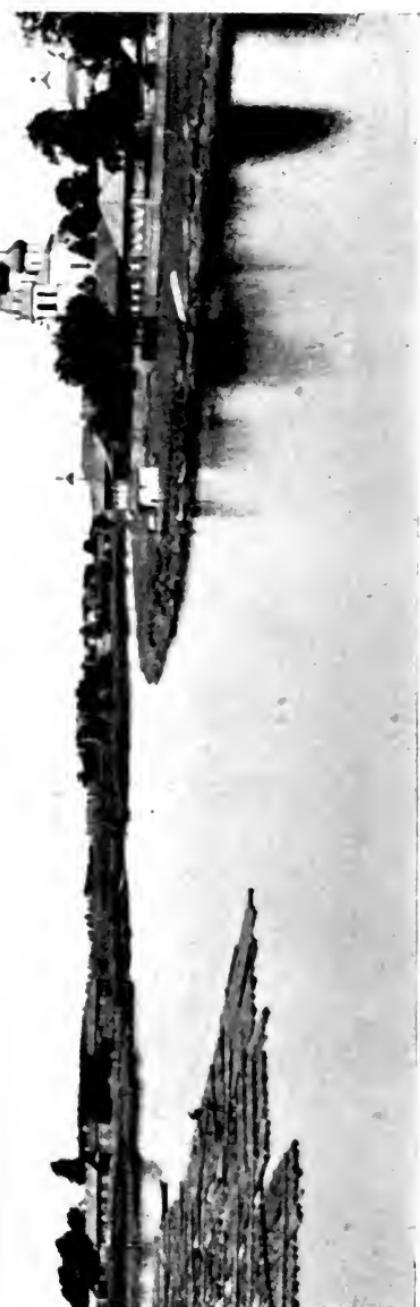
Through Russia in War-time

room possessed four windows, nor lacked size, and at my request a young man factotum brought bed requisites, which are considered extras, since most Russians carry such articles with them wherever they travel. I learnt ere long that the wall upon two sides of my apartment did not reach the ceiling, a disagreeable arrangement, prompted presumably by a desire to economize in material or aid ventilation or the diffusion of warmth.

On the next day I determined to walk out into the country, paying no attention to a warning lately offered me by a friend, who said that in war-time the peasants would be more than usually suspicious of a stranger. The idea that I might possibly be considered by them a secret emissary of the authorities appeared to me highly comical. Leaving the town's irregular-surfaced pavements and separate wooden one-story houses, I struck across some beautiful green meadows, and, following a mere track for a distance of two or three miles, came upon a bend of the river Vòlogda. To my right, and beyond extensive level fields of waving green barley, rose an ancient and magnificent monastery, looking, with its high walls and bastions, for all the world like a fortress. To the left and in front, across the water, lay a village. A shaggy ferryman plied the clumsy oars of a small wherry, in which, when nobody else was crossing, I seated myself. Not knowing what to say without betraying my ignorance of his mother-tongue, I held my peace, and so we looked at each other in silence till, having rewarded him, I clambered up on the other side. Above the river-bank



THE RIVER. VÔLOGDA.



Vòlogda

several windmills, each with six sails, and clustered at one end of the scattered village, stood out against the horizon, but the village itself was composed, as is usual, of square log-huts or cabins, each with two, three, or four small windows. There were no gardens or enclosures around these habitations, which were placed separately on either side of a broad street, unpaved, indeed with healthy grass growing over its whole surface. Two or three tiny shops seemed in dark interiors to stock a little of everything, and a small church, with a single tower and no cupolas, stood at one end of the street. Turning homewards, I reached a high-road, and there met a succession of peasants laden with various bundles, containing, doubtless, purchases made in Vòlogda. Certainly the women bore heavier burdens than the men, but many of either sex carried their top-boots in their hands and walked with bare feet. Nobody talked or joked, but some boys said to me, “Dàitye spyèechkee, Bärin !” (“Give us some matches, sir”), and laughed when I did not reply.

In the evening I went along the riverside through Vòlogda towards a so-called Italian circus, whose advent, being a great attraction, had filled all the hotels, upon a window of one of which a handbill stated that the Zingari were come. This walk is pleasantly fixed in my memory, for it lay past several graceful churches lining the banks of the winding river, on which floated a huge timber raft. In a boat drifting down the stream sat a musician, whose concertina gave forth a melody of fascinating lilt. The circus, somewhat to my astonishment, was filled

Through Russia in War-time

with a well, even fashionably, dressed audience, though a few peasant women found room at the rear, and wore white silk kerchiefs about their heads. I presume it was the general officer in command of the district who, occupying a place of honour, shuddered when the clown, with boisterous humour and astonishing agility, suddenly deposited himself disrespectfully near. Exactly opposite sat another dignitary of, I should imagine, civil rank, and attired in a less magnificent uniform. The performance was by no means inferior to what is often seen in an English country town, and oh ! most wonderful, there was an absence of the horsey effluvia usually associated with such entertainments. Plenty of cinemas minister to popular requirements in Russia, and, if they have not all reached perfection, the shows are well managed and far from despicable. In Vologda the chief part of the silent drama consisted in the villain's misinterpretation of an algebraic formula written on a blackboard in a chemist's laboratory. Virtue triumphed when he blew himself to pieces. For a day or two I was content to fall back on such dreary diversions as were afforded by the cafés, therein study a phrase-book, or, with a pocket dictionary, laboriously attack a newspaper. Fortunately 'tchai c'limònûm' or tea, served in a tumbler with sugar and a slice of lemon, is a refreshing drink, enjoying which I did not mind the simplicity, not to say occasional squalor, of my surroundings. For I went sometimes among the peasants, one of my objects being to observe these strange men in their thick and tangled locks, who,

Vòlogda

taking ‘tchai’ and ‘khlyèb’ (bread) at little tables, exchange scanty confidences and behave as orderly, almost too subdued, members of society.

Although unable to test the mental outfit of the moujiks by conversation, I could believe, when remarking their intense religious observances and generally stolid, gloomy faces, that they might harbour strange superstitions. As is well known, the blessing of the waters of the Nevà in winter is an important ceremony, carried out in Petrograd in the presence of the greatest. But writers, happy in personal experience or ability to acquire reliable information, describe impressive rites performed by a priest among snow-clad pine-trees in remote districts, when (as the peasants believe), under the influence of solemn words, ghostly denizens of the woods feel constrained to seek icy watery depths. We hear of lyrical homage to the season of Spring; are told, maybe, of poultry sacrificed to a water-god, or even cattle immolated to propitiate hidden powers, of annual periods when water nymphs or the devil can exercise the liveliest influence on human beings. As might be expected, magical conjurations to ward off disasters are common. But in certain country districts the peasants will endeavour by peace offerings to win, in the season of ripening crops, the goodwill of a god of thunder. And their mode of life? It is prosaic. The moujik taking a wife is influenced less by good looks than by her strength and willingness to work, and he is apt to correct her severely. The ‘izbà’ is simply furnished with table, stools, and benches, wrought

Through Russia in War-time

by the peasant himself, for he can use his axe skilfully. The top of an indispensable large flat stove affords a convenient spot whereon, during the long and severe winter months, to obtain rest and sleep. At that time the moujik, like his wife or other members of the family, is apt to become a kustar—that is, engage in some industry special to the village, such as wood-carving or the manufacture of pottery or cutlery. As to his diet, it consists chiefly of rye bread, tea, cabbage soup, and one of several forms of porridge. Indulgence in vodka, a spirit made of corn or potato, has heretofore been a solace on frequent idle days. But he obtains intense satisfaction from the village vapour baths, in which once a week he cleanses his person, enduring then a degree of heat only within the powers of a Russian. Although cunning, the peasant, like a child, has a limited outlook. His stern and bitter life struggle and the tenets and observances of the Greek Orthodox Church fill much of his daily horizon. A firm believer in the efficacy of his ikòn, he is stoical under misfortune, and in no way devoured by ambition, while his habits of thought, tinged by easy good-nature, are altogether less logical than those of educated persons, and his moral judgments can be lax. Transfer of such a being to a new mode of life must be hazardous, and apparently the rise of great industrial enterprises, manual workers in which are often housed by the manufacturer, has brought not betterment but deterioration and a larger share of misery. Toil on the land is carried on arduously

Vòlogda

by men and women during the short summer, but the peasant shows himself a poor agriculturist, and, over wide districts, gives no care to enrichment of the soil. The mir, or commune, owns, it may be, several thousand acres, and as the visitor walks along the road or travels by train he sees, not the irregular fields common in England, but a vast plain marked by parallel stretches of ground, mostly under rye or oats or lying fallow. The system often permits a triennial rotation of crops, and the family has its special strip of land, the question of distribution being settled by the mir.

Before leaving the ancient city Vòlogda, which possesses a Cathedral and dates from the twelfth century, I obtained a glimpse of a workman's home. Proceeding past some large barrack-like Government offices, and following a road constructed of transverse poles, I saw beside a log-cabin, not exactly the desired indication, the word 'Potchèen-shtcheek' (cobbler), but a crude representation of a pair of top-boots. Hearing my knock at the door, a man with dark, intelligent eyes invited me to enter and be seated on a stool. When I explained my needs he said laconically, "Mòzhno" ("It is possible"). The shop, which was presumably the main room of the house, contained a large stove with a flat top. Out of the oven a round loaf of rye bread was soon lifted by a woman, who retired to an inner apartment, though a little boy of about three or four years, nude below the middle, remained to run about and be petted by his father. The room, being lighted by but a small

Through Russia in War-time

window, was dark, yet I could well see an old man using his awl ; and this dignified figure, who wore a long and beautiful white beard, had attained, as his son proudly informed me, eighty years of age. I might have learned from him something of the days of serfdom if, instead of being condemned with much labour to bring forth an occasional word, I had been able to talk. The cobbler did his work deftly, and, having made a reasonable charge, said “Zdràfstvueety” (“Good day”) in a pleasant manner. Crossing the river bridge, I could peer into a gigantic timber-ship, the upper part of whose hull had been dismantled that men and women might the better unload her.

By no means a magnificent place is Vòlogda, though Ivàn the Terrible thought of making it the capital. But it impressed me more favourably than Archangel—it seemed more human ! Thus a baby, lifting its voice lustily, startled me by the likeness of its cry to that of a British infant ; some little girls were stringing daisies into bangles as little girls string them in England ; and a shopman, after I had made a purchase, said, “Tshto yeshtshò ?” exactly as his like in England would say, “What’s the next article ? ”

Dwelling on what I saw of the peasants in Archangel and Vòlogda, I have endeavoured to understand how the blight of serfdom arose. Of old the moujik showed after harvest a tendency to roam, which made it difficult for the commune to satisfy the Tsar’s tax-collectors. Therefore the village elders, foreseeing no deadly peril, welcomed Borìs

Vologda

Godunòv's proposal, at the end of the sixteenth century, to attach the workers to the soil. Pitiful was the result. Gradually but surely the chains were drawn tight until the lord, acquiring legal right to inflict corporal punishment on his 'souls' at his discretion, held the moujìk completely in his power. Serfdom has scarcely existed in other countries so thoroughly or with such untoward effect as in Russia, where, despite much rich soil, the physical conditions have militated against man's swift advance.

Nor has the liberation in 1861 been followed by a striking improvement, for since that date, while the area of land then made over to the peasants has remained stationary, their numbers have doubled. Nevertheless, I fancied I saw a less spiritless and subservient demeanour among the moujìks in some parts of Russia than when I first visited the country a generation ago.

CHAPTER IV

PETROGRAD

NEXT to Petrograd! For twenty-four hours through forests of birch and fir and giant Christmas trees, and here and there a little meadowland or fields of green wheat! Peasant girls, fresh and simple of countenance, made a bright show with their coloured silk head kerchiefs as, usually accompanied by swains, they thronged the platforms to watch, on this Sunday, the coming and going of the train. Russians, as well as strangers who travel in their country, are generally sociable during railway journeys. From a delightful Frenchman who, though now a merchant, looked back with regret to his days as a mathematical student, and proved to me his love of science by demonstrating some properties of the hyperbola, I learnt that there exist many interesting races on the shores of the Caspian, particularly at Astrakhan. He spoke glowingly of the voyage on the Volga. So, little by little, I allowed a project to form in my mind. Instead of hastening homeward, I would learn enough of the language to venture forth on a journey, proceed through Moscow southward and perhaps then eastward, and so get a glimpse of Little Russians, Tatars,

Petrograd

Kalmucks, and Khirghiz! As a friendly young Russian gentleman spoke favourably of some furnished apartments in the Nèvsky Prospekt, I drove to them directly the train reached the capital, and thus avoided that eternal recourse to hotels which is the necessary bane of travellers, however anxious they may be to enjoy something of local life and conditions.

To make myself understood when interviewing the proprietor proved a severe ordeal. He had a few vacant rooms, and seemed disappointed that I chose not his finest chamber, a dazzling surprise in red plush. Perhaps he was puzzled that an Englishman could exist and display no generally lavish tendency ; but I concluded a satisfactory bargain, and found myself established beneath a small ikon situated high in a corner of thoroughly clean and not uncomfortable quarters. For two roubles a day I had acquired the use of a bedstead and mattress, two tables and a handsome brass inkstand, lace curtains and several chairs ; also a washstand where the water, rising from a tap as if from a toy fountain, escaped through the basin immediately. The Russians sluice their faces with running water, caught up in the two hands held together, our method of carrying on ablutions being by them condemned.

The settling of details as to bed-linen and breakfast involved courageous practice in Russian, to which I found myself now suddenly forced. At first a shade of irritation would pass over the faces of the concierge or the women servants when I stopped awkwardly in a sentence, but a trace of

Through Russia in War-time

pity and gentle resignation ere long became manifest. How really astonishing to find a people some of whose comparatively humble members care to correct a stranger's mistakes in gender, number, and case ! It was encouraging to feel quite sure, once in a while, of a new form of expression. Then, revelling in its utterance, I gave hearers to understand that, so to speak, my turn had come ! ' Spaceèbo ' (' thank you ') seemed superfluous, but ' kharashò ' (' good ') could be freely indulged in, even ' ôtchen kharashò ' (' very good '), while ' da ' (' yes ') and ' nièt ' (' no '), pronounced with much emphasis, were godsends to my humbled spirits. ' Nitchevò ' (' nothing ') remained as a reserve not yet to be lightly employed. It stood on a higher plane, after soaring to which I was apt to land in difficulties.

Without loss of time, I inquired in a quarter devoted to the pursuit of learning how conveniently to gain the services of a student who, correcting my first Russian utterances, would genially encourage me in further efforts. The gentleman to whom I applied offered himself to become my guide, and soon came to visit me. If he did not prove perfect in the capacity of teacher, he was most gentle of manner, and patient, and of very considerable assistance. Russian is difficult of acquisition because it possesses a copious alphabet, many long words and strange sounds, a complicated grammar, a rich vocabulary, and a capricious accentuation. Acquiring it when children, even illiterate natives cope with the intricacies of a tongue whose grammar, as a mental discipline, should rank with that of Greek.

Petrograd

Yet, the fine literature boasting a Pushkin cannot compare with that adorned by Æschylus and his mighty successors. Besides, the language of Moscow has a growing commercial importance which of itself might prove, in the opinion of University authorities, a reason why it should not displace the most beautiful ancient tongue of academic renown. Nevertheless, Russian will make good headway, if only because its study is intellectually delightful. The expression of ideas in such a highly inflected tongue certainly gratifies persons with a taste for languages : it satisfies their sense of power. Something laudable has been accomplished when, with newly acquired mental agility, one can face imperturbably the exacting demands of prepositions, revel in a delicate choice of verbs, smile at past difficulties in swiftly coupling adjective and noun. As hundreds of Englishmen are now wrestling with the speech which is so mighty a possession of the Tsar's subjects, perhaps the science and art of acquiring languages will receive fresh attention. Confiding to my instructor my desire to master rapidly such expressions as would be useful to a traveller, he proved complacent but introduced me to a grammar in the vernacular which was necessarily formidable. At the end of three weeks' instruction I had gained confidence and dared set forth upon a long journey.

Petrograd is distinguished by individuality. At a bend of the Nevà stands an imposing collection of Government buildings, the resort and special purlieu of a bureaucracy controlling the Empire. Thence radiate, east and south, fine avenues whereof

Through Russia in War-time

the famous Nèvsky Prospekt is the chief. To connect these stretch, like cross-strands of a spider's web, streets and water channels. The founder of the capital had vast difficulties to contend with at its inception ; and, the site being a swamp, great piles were driven down for the purpose of solidification. To the west and north of the central core of handsome Imperial offices lies the delta of the Nevà, with several islands partly built upon for the maintenance of a busy population, but partly left in a natural, park-like condition. Forests, but not hills, circumscribe Petrograd, where a rapidly increasing throng, now amounting to two millions, dwell mostly in tenement houses that scarcely yet attain to more than a moderate height. Four canals, the Fontànka the largest, thread the central part of the city, and alone remain of those originally constructed to carry into the river the soil's excess of moisture.

As to the Nèvsky Prospekt, it is probably the broadest among the long and straight streets of the world. Over its level surface, paved with hexagonal blocks of wood, speed countless small dròschkies whose isvòstchiks, clad in thickly padded blue arm-yaks reaching to the ground, and low-crowned hats remarkable for a broad curly brim, control rough willing little steeds with but voice and reins. It is true the traffic does not appear large in comparison with that of other mighty human hives, and though along the magnificent thoroughfare there runs to various parts of flattest Petrograd an efficient service of single deck trams, omnibuses are remarkable for their absence. The broad pavements of the best

Petrograd

portion of the Nèvsky provide a promenade for countless officials, bemedalled military officers and well-to-do folk generally, including the visitors ever attracted to a great capital. But in winter, as seen by me on another occasion, the fashionable end of the Prospekt presents, during the short afternoon, an especially attractive spectacle, for at that time it is crowded with fashionable ladies resplendent in furs. The bright eyes, and glowing cheeks, and graceful carriage of many beauties, stimulated to brisk exercise by a frosty atmosphere, leave an ineffaceable impression on the mind of a fresh arrival at the height of the season in Petrograd. In attempting a survey of this wonderful street, it is well to begin at the eastern and less important end. There is situated a celebrated monastery which, founded by Peter the Great, and embellished by Catherine II, does honour to Alexander Nèvsky, a Grand Duke who overcame on the same spot Swedes and Teutons in the thirteenth century. Around the cathedral, where rest in a reliquary this saint's bones, are other ecclesiastical edifices, as well as gardens and cells of ascetic monks; the whole forming a fit example of the importance, wealth, and widely permeating influence of the Greek Orthodox Church.

However, as to ocular effect, the glory of the Nèvsky begins at the Znàmensky Plòstchad. In the centre of this open place stands a statue of Alexander III, a Tsar not perhaps of the most liberal sort (he succeeded an assassinated father), but one affording the sculptor an opportunity for fine work. Surely such a strong horse and mounted man are

Through Russia in War-time

visible nowhere else in the world. So thick and sturdy is the steed that, supporting a redoubtable-looking master in national costume, he offers a spectacle at first startling and then mightily impressive. Walking round the pair, I gazed at something of which aspiring Russian art may well be proud. If now, keeping to the left, one walks upon the roomy pavement westward, he sees a shop where somewhat crude ikôns are offered in the window at a price of a rouble and upwards. Then, past tall buildings of regular architecture (no more is to be found here the traktir of a generation since, with its huge mechanical organ and customers clad in sheepskin), the wayfarer advances until, at the corner of the Fontànka or chief canal, he arrives at a palace without which, near a narrow sentry - box distinguished by black and white diagonal lines, stands on guard, immovable as a statue, a soldier grasping a rifle with its bayonet fixed. The cold gleam of his pale blue eyes, directed firmly forward, hints the determination with which this warrior could use his weapon. The Anichkov Palace is a modern building of not much intrinsic significance, but here the Imperial family frequently resides, though the broad gates effectually conceal from passers-by precincts sacred to the Tsar, a figure worthily symbolic of Russian might and unity.

Farther on comes to view the Alexander Square, a gravelled central space supplied with comfortable seats and surrounded by shady walks, so that not only nurses and children, but many another, of probably less simple soul, can pass the time pleasantly.

Petrograd

This spot is dominated by a lofty bell-shaped group in bronze. The great Catherine, of handsome, pleasing features, attended by nine persons adorning her reign, gazes from a height of fifty feet. Ever evincing a warm regard for Russia's interests, this remarkable sovereign of undistinguished birth saw before her death her country enriched by conquests which included the enchanting Crimea, and in large part historic Poland and the magnificent Caucasus. Although early, and for a brief while, mated to a future Tsar who treated her ill, she reminds us after her election to the throne of our own virgin Queen. Counsellors dreaded to see their Tsarina re-wedded, but her heart found unfailingly a means to lavish its affection. While the English monarch possessed the more powerful, imperious mind, the Russian was softer and truer. How impossible to imagine Henry VIII's daughter enduring rough treatment from a subject! But Catherine suffered worse than rudeness from one at least of her successive favourites, and always advanced to high position and loaded with riches those whom she loved. Ruling, at a brilliant period, a people who for centuries had benefited from parliamentary institutions, Elizabeth formed one in a succession of personally strenuous autocrats. But Catherine ascended the throne when a Dùma was undreamed of, a hundred years before the serfs' emancipation, and in a foreign literary atmosphere, and while she followed three sovereigns—Peter the Great, his niece, and daughter—each marked by force, barbarity, and looseness of life, yet her advent became the signal

Through Russia in War-time

for Tsars of a better order. The line of monarchs exemplified by our Queen Elizabeth did not quickly depart from old methods, just as her people could but gradually and surely advance, for such has been their nature; but Catherine seemed able to alter Tsardom, and Russians have proved themselves capable of swift changes. Perhaps a hopeful moral may be drawn from the emotional race. Though the primitive manner in which minor justice is dispensed in the Communes indicates that the mass of Russians have scarcely yet emerged from mediaeval conditions, yet the willingness, nay, eagerness, of the intellectual classes to acquire and put into force new ideas may, despite vast difficulties, bring comparatively speedy progress to their country.

Close to the Alexander Square rises the Imperial Library, proud in the possession of especial literary treasures, besides two million ordinary volumes. Here I found, under a full-length oil painting of the Tsar, accommodation for more readers than at the British Museum; but the demand for books is less constant, nor did any earnest-looking and long-haired young women in blouses upon the present occasion add singularity to the scene. Wishing to make use of this magnificent institution, I found myself able to fill in a form of application, and recalled as I did so how, years before, with characteristic Russian kindness, a fashionably dressed lady reader graciously, upon the same spot, helped me through a similar task. Crossing the Sadovaya, a long and busy street thronged with unaristocratic persons, as is the whole region to the



KAZAN CATHEDRAL, PETROGRAD.



Petrograd

south (for here are to be met many men in an ever similar garb of blue caps with cloth peak, dark cloth jacket, and trousers tucked into long boots), one reaches the Gostìnni Dvor, an immense collection of shops. It was in this neighbourhood that, wishing to purchase a portmanteau, I essayed the task. Though ready to bargain, I had not expected that the price demanded successively by two salesmen for the same article would differ by several roubles. If the visitor continue far along the Sadóvaya he can explore extensive bazaars of semi-Eastern appearance, furnished with lanes and open spaces, where Tatars, very shrewd hucksters, offer various low-priced wares.

The Nèvsky's next building, the Kazàn Cathedral, is of extreme interest, not so much on account of its high-pillared, semicircular approach, which faintly suggests the colonnade of St. Peter's at Rome, as because of the religious zeal manifested within its walls. Walking between the statues of two famous generals, Kutùsov and Barclay de Tolly, and noticing many beggars, one enters an edifice rendered warlike by French flags, the keys of many captured cities, and the presence of brilliantly uniformed and much-decorated officers. The door being that of a transept, you come at once upon an immense blaze of lighted candles, and if a service is in progress, incense has been wafted about, and deep voices utter such choral responses to the priestly pronouncement that you are certain you have never heard truly heavenly music before. The devout nearly fill the church: in it stand or kneel

Through Russia in War-time

a throng of great and lowly: the fashionable lady in costly dress standing probably next to an old crone placing her lips on the marble floor, or to a young peasant teaching her little one to make the sign of the cross. Perhaps beside you is a group of three or four monks, who, shaggy and unkempt, in shabby black gowns, suggest a scene in the Middle Ages. It is noticeable that the pious act, whether it be kissing an ikòn or making with the thumb and two fingers the sign of the cross, is performed several times, for the Russians are intense. But why is this church so holy? To some extent because of its magnificent ikonostàs, or screen, separating off the Holy of Holies, which is made of silver treasures rescued by Cossacks from Napoleon's booty-laden army on its retreat from Moscow; but far more on account of the wonder-working image of Our Lady of Kazàn, which, under a gloria of precious stones, the largest of them a wonderful sapphire, is visible on the left of the ikonostàs. If about to make a prolonged stay away from the capital, the Tsar visits this cathedral for prayer, and does the same upon his return.

By now the visitor, having reached the important part of the city's greatest artery, looks round at tall stone buildings which shelter foreign banks and fine shops. He is astonished by the number of large book-stores, but in a land where political activity or any effort which may be disadvantageous to the Orthodox Church brings peril, there exists the liveliest interest in things intellectual. About

Petrograd

this spot, to any one glancing across the road, is visible near a canal a fane in Russian style, and of very extraordinary appearance. No harmonies of column and tympanum, no slender spire or massive tower, no delicate window tracery, fan-shaped vaulting, or vast longitudinal perspective, here impress the Western beholder; but instead the sight of domes and cupolas of bizarre shapes, enamel surface, and crude colours without, and of lofty, massive piers, a multitude of magnificent mosaics, and a gorgeous ikonostàs within, appeal to his æsthetic sense. The great structure, a clear manifestation of the vitality and conservatism of the Orthodox, marks the spot where the noble liberator of the serfs, the Tsar Alexander II, fell, after receiving his death-blow at the hands of a youthful fanatic Nihilist. Near by, housed in a grand palace, is a fine collection of paintings, which, almost as much as the Church of Expiation, instances the individuality of Russian life and thought. On the walls hang many, vigorous pictures animated with profound feeling for the dramatic in the country's history and for the happiness and pathos of its life. A delightful freshness characterizes the work of many modern Russian painters, who worthily prove the artistic advances of a people utterly unlike the Teuton, Latin, or Celtic races, and of comparatively recent emergence from untoward conditions.

Returning to the Nèvsky, the visitor continues his walk, and soon notices the policeman on point duty in the middle of the road. Whether clean-shaven or extremely hirsute, the gorodovòi is

Through Russia in War-time

urbaneously helpful to those making inquiries. Of yore provided with sword and revolver, he now carries besides those weapons a truncheon, the addition of which milder alternative to his armoury should be of good omen. At the end of the Nèvsky is situated a resort for the sociably inclined, the much-frequented Alexander Garden, a promenade and exhibition of horticultural beauty, which affords the visitor an opportunity to observe the genial and unaffected nature of the people as they either stroll about or bask on benches in the sunshine, or by preference rest under shade-giving leafy branches. Of such moderate height as to allow convenient inspection, bronze effigies of intellectuals dot the grounds, of whom perhaps Gògol, realist, satirist, humorist, and pioneer in Russian fiction, is the best known to us.

A few steps farther brings one to the magnificent granite quay lining the Nevà, as it flows east to west, after a course of only forty-two miles from Lake Làdoga. The surface of the majestic river is but little obscured by traffic, though it knows a service of passenger steamers plying with or against the flood, gazing over which I saw high buildings on the large islands separating the channels of the stream before it joins the Gulf of Finland. Directly in front stand the Exchange, the University (closed since the outbreak of the war), and the Zoological Museum, rich in specimens of the remains of the mammoth. So vast are certain public edifices in Petrograd that much time may be consumed in passing them, as I found when passing the almost

Petrograd

deserted quay beside the Admiralty. The spire adorning this institution is unusually lofty and graceful, and happily visible from several streets radiating through the heart of the city. Next is reached the enormous Winter Palace, an edifice of regular classical design, and painted red, first constructed in the time of the Empress Anne, but in its present form dating from the nineteenth century. Adjoining is the Hermitage, famous for its art collection, and approached from the huge square in whose centre rises the Alexander Column. Ten Atlantes of dark granite, and nearly a score of feet high, support the roof of a portico at the entrance to the museum.

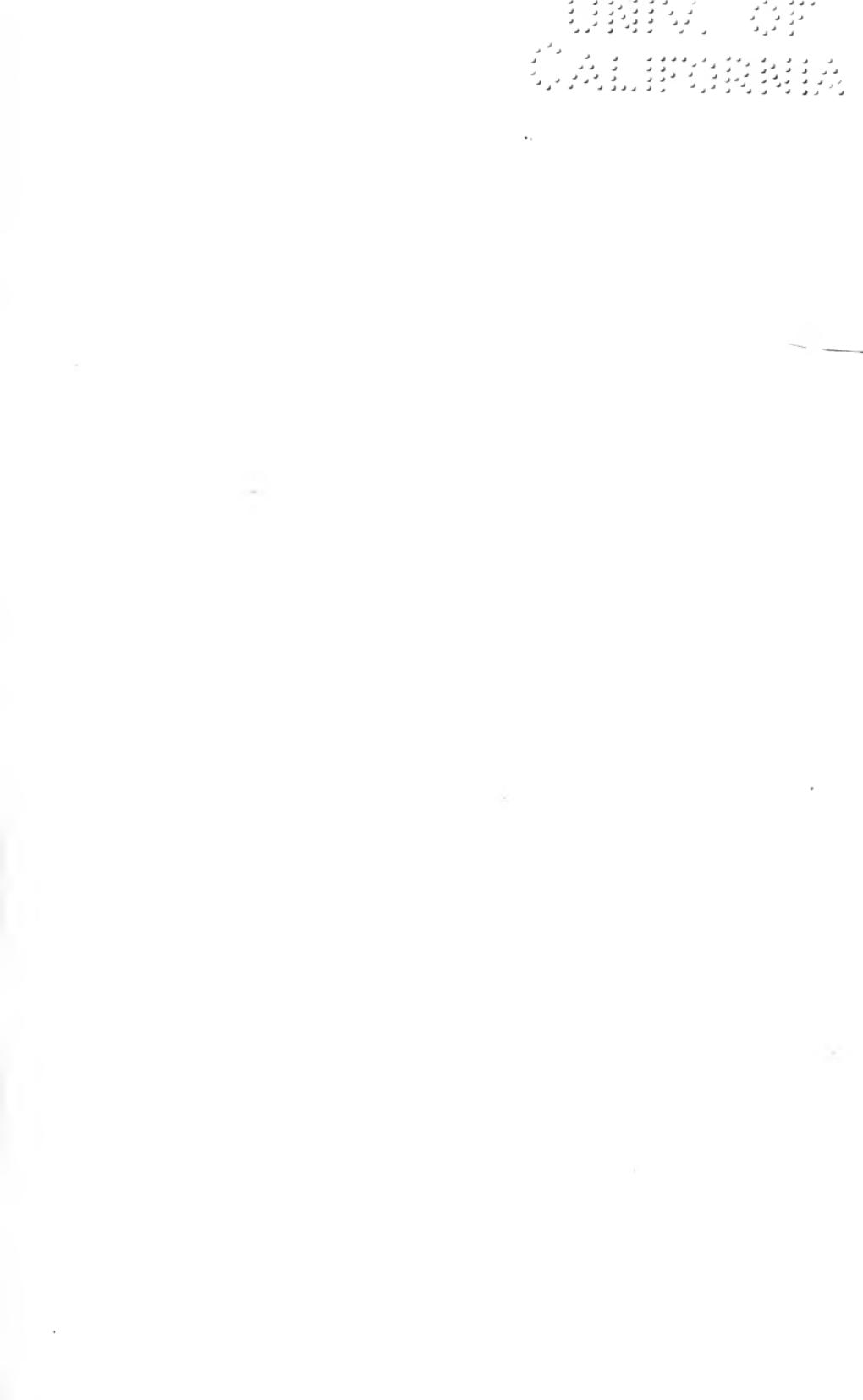
Entering I passed into an atmosphere of Imperial dignity and grandeur, yet of welcome, for the treatment of visitors is fully in accord with the immense importance of the treasures here gathered together. Among the famous pictures those by Rembrandt arouse special admiration, but the beautiful objects are of indeed bewildering number. Here are the various exquisite specimens brought from Kertch and other places in Southern Russia, where, two or three generations ago, they were discovered in tumuli. The periods represented include the most renowned periods of Greek art, namely, of the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ. A profusion of gold diadems, necklaces, and rings astonish the beholder. A large drinking-horn is ornamented with the head of a wild boar. There are golden balls and swords and axes from the Caucasus, but among the countless objects commanding attention,

Through Russia in War-time

perhaps pre-eminent, is the silver vase from a tomb near Nicopol, on the Lower Dneiper. Thereon is revealed something of the life followed by the ancient Scythians. Men of Slav type, appearing much like the Russian peasants of to-day, are depicted overcoming wild horses on the steppe. Thus a noble work of art, due to the transcendent æsthetic impulse of a bygone age, ministers in our time to interest which is archaeological: and with a few it is a passion to know the life of their long past predecessors.

Close at hand, to the west, the handsome Troitzki bridge spans the Nevà, and gives access to the dread fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, an old stronghold of the Vauban type, fronting the river and surrounded by water. As the pedestrian looks down on moat and granite walls he pities any political prisoners who may be herein confined. But he has to come to this spot to inspect the small cathedral distinguishable afar by its high and delicate steeple. Upon the floor, side by side, lie many simple Imperial graves of white marble, for nearly all the Russian rulers since the foundation of the city, including Peter the Great, with some of their kin, have here a resting-place.

Distances in Petrograd being great, dròschkies are a necessity, but the new-comer soon learns that it is wise to arrive at a preliminary understanding with the isvòstchik, who is generally a rough creature, and sometimes exorbitant in his charges. Returning by the same bridge, one can conveniently reach the pleasant Summer Garden and the great Field





ST. ISAAC'S CATHEDRAL. PETROGRAD.

Petrograd

of Mars, where I found a score or two of mounted Cossacks, who, in high black astrakhan hats and long coats, exhibited much graceful skill in their wheelings and turnings and other evolutions. It is not far hence again to the Dvortzòvaya Plòstchad, or Palace Square, where, opposite the Winter Palace, rise in a semicircle the great red offices of the Ministry of Finance and of the Imperial Military Staff. Proceeding thus energetically, the visitor has already made considerable progress in his effort to learn something of Peter's city. But soon he proceeds along either the street named after Gògol or the elegant Morskàya to St. Isaac's Cathedral, which stands magnificently free, and offers an impressive spectacle. In the form of a cross, almost as wide as long, the great church is approached by broad steps and four porticoes, composed of huge monolithic pillars. Of polished red Finland granite, they rise from a bronze base to terminate in a capital of the same metal. The figures in two of the four pediments relate scenes in the life of St. Isaac, who is shown in converse with Roman emperors. A mighty and gilded central dome, surrounded by four smaller domes, crowns the structure. The sides, without and within, are of marble. The Russian churches often disappoint in the particular of inner dimensions, and the somewhat dark interior of St. Isaac's suffers from a serious encroachment upon its floor space by heavy granite-cased columns. But the ikonostàs is both of vast size and the embodiment of gorgeousness, being of gilded marble adorned with mosaics of

Through Russia in War-time

saints, while a bronze inner door has columns of lapis lazuli and malachite. Not penetrating inner recesses full of silver and gold and ecclesiastic vessels, I gazed at many ikôns and observed their precious stones, then surveyed once more, without and from a distance, the massive and harmonious proportions of a church the dignity and simple grandeur of whose design never failed to arouse my admiration.

At hand is a monument erected, not for worship of an omnipotent Deity, but in remembrance of a powerful Tsar. In a flower-decked square, adjoining the Nevà, rises a splendid statue of the man who, more than any other, compassed Muscovite progress. Upon a huge irregular block of granite a horse, bearing that Peter whom all the world calls Great, stands in the act of springing forward. While the rider's hand is extended toward the city, which developed according to his aspirations, the steed's hoof tramples on a writhing serpent, thus symbolizing a will which could crush almost insurmountable obstacles. This Tsar transformed a semi-Oriental people. Relying on his reason in a daring manner, he swept away and replaced, or courageously modified, or where had been a void he caused to exist. So he re-created a nation. When but ten years old Peter received a fearful lesson in the potentialities of his environment, for he saw the mob imbrue ruthless and murderous hands in the blood of his uncle. A highly intelligent and ambitious elder sister, Sophia, gave him good instructors, especially a Swiss, who, if



STATUE OF PETER THE GREAT. PETROGRAD.



Petrograd

of imperfect morals, was yet a sound disciplinarian, able to instil in his pupil ideas undreamed of by previous Russian sovereigns.

Under direction the Tsarèvitch advanced, yet was free to choose his companions and indulge in any diversion, wherefore he diverted his thought to shipbuilding. By his mother's advice he married, at seventeen, beautiful but stupid Eudoxia Lopukhina, whom he saw, after separation, become a centre of opposition to the reforms dictated by his original and masterful mind. As to Sophia, who had ruled during his minority, she was overcome by the aid of a Scotch soldier of fortune and immured by Peter in a convent. To obtain now a maritime outlet superior to Archangel, he opened a campaign against the Turks at Azov, but failed in his purpose. A bold step next! He quitted his country in search afresh of friends, ideas, and knowledge. For restless energy and indomitable force governed the doings of the Tsar, strong in body and brain, careless of comfort, despising luxury, often exhibiting contempt for conventions when visiting the dockyards of England and Holland. At news of rebellion he went homeward, yet took in his train five hundred persons of special skill. And then a fearful action left a stain on his career. The mutiny of the Stryéltsi, or Militia, had already been suppressed; nevertheless, Peter could wreak vengeance of a blood-curdling character on several hundred of the rebels, and insist that his boyàrs should personally aid in inflicting on them ingeniously devised and lingering torments. He felt

Through Russia in War-time

and acted as an Eastern despot to those who thwarted his will. Not but that, if mildness was politic, he would subdue his rage ; could even write temperately worded warnings to favoured wrongdoers in his service. While his defeat by the Swedes, at Narva, led the Tsar to reorganize his Army, his overthrow of Charles XII at Poltava, and success in the long contest for the Baltic Provinces, assured the future of that new capital, which doubtless had been suggested to his mind by the Dutch canal cities. But his enlightened genius needed the stimulus of ceaseless effort. Now he rescued women from quasi-seclusion, now ordered men to comport themselves before him with less humiliating subservience. So he made inroads on the power and independence of the Church, or built a fleet, or imposed serious responsibilities on his nobles. Unfortunately, he attached a certain class of previously free peasants to the soil, thus intensifying serfdom's evils. But he introduced newspapers, established a public theatre in Moscow, organized merchants into guilds, abolished some degrading laws, divided the Empire into separate governments, instituted a Senate. Alas ! he did to death with barbaric cruelty a wretched weakling son who, wishing to enter a monastery, had taken refuge in Italy. This Alexis, under false promises, was lured home that vengeance could be wreaked on him for 'imagining revolt.' A danger that the succession might devolve upon a reactionary having been thus averted, Peter busied himself with further reforms until struck fatally ill in 1725. Ever sure of a place among the titanic

Petrograd

figures of history, he exemplifies the intertwining of good and evil in the nature and affairs of men,

Westward, but not far from St. Isaac's, is an institution of great importance, to wit, the Post Office, which seemed to me admirably managed. Owing to the exigencies of war, a period of three weeks elapsed between dispatch and delivery of English letters. Nevertheless, no communication failed to reach me wherever I went in Russia, though each bore the official mark of the Censor. But the uncertainty in such circumstances was unpleasant. Walking to make daily inquiries, I would often see a hundred or so men being drilled on the cobblestoned square by the Marie Theatre, which, like the other State-supported theatres, was closed. But little military display enlivened the city, though sometimes a grey-coated regiment would march with its strong, sturdy fellows seven abreast, down the Nèvsky, unpreceded by a band. Twice or thrice I saw a deserter led away in the middle of a guard of seven or eight soldiers. But the general atmosphere was of earnest determination, and crowds watched the bulletins in the office windows of the *Novòye Vrèmya*.

With unbroken assiduity paragraphs in the daily journals alluded to happenings among even the slightest units of British shipping; and, alas! at that time losses were frequent owing to the ruthless activity of the enemy's submarines. Moreover, the newspapers endeavoured to acquaint their readers with the patriotic and forceful utterances of such Ministers as Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, and

Through Russia in War-time

Sir Edward Grey. Strange, indeed, seemed these names in Russian characters. Nor was it the fault of the public prints if our northern Allies lacked knowledge of our statesmen's features. Meanwhile the intense interest in England taken by Russians crystallized in a question addressed to me frequently : "Is there any change in London?" When I announced that the formation of Lord Kitchener's Army had made a noticeable difference in our vast capital, eyes brightened and voices showed feeling.

Sometimes in the streets a double file of invalids would be seen marching under the care of a nurse in a white head-dress, and having on her left arm the red cross. If the remains of a dead hero were being taken to their final resting-place, after a military party, heading the procession, came a white car and mutes in a complete garb of white, then the mourning relatives, for the most part on foot, even if they were women. The general mortality in Petrograd is high, as might be expected from the disregard of modern ideals of sanitation. Doubtless a widespread ignorance increases the sad effects of poverty on children. I have seldom seen so large a proportion of little ones with the bowed legs indicative of faulty nutrition. But if in Petrograd there are fewer green spaces to act as air purifiers than in our own capital, there is, nevertheless, a manifest desire to benefit the masses.

Thus, crossing the Neva by the Troitzki Bridge, one soon comes on a parklike space and two institutions highly characteristic of Russia, that country of many races and an enormous peasantry metaphor-

Petrograd

ically crying aloud for elevation. While, opposite a boulevard, stands a still unfinished Mohammedan mosque, whose immense dome, covered by glazed tiles of a brilliant blue, has a form which would be represented in section by a horse-shoe, farther on, by pleasant gardens, rises a People's Palace, proving municipal sympathy with the lowly. Within are collections of art specimens open for inspection to all. Moreover, when moujik and artisan come hither, they may also appease their hunger. At long tables, in a hall, a number of tousled men and kerchiefed women sat eating with huge wooden spoons a stew that was probably appetizing, though any savoury odours it may have possessed were disguised by other and not very choice aromas. The hour being long past mid-day, I boldly endeavoured to obtain some sustenance in a restaurant upstairs: and, for my misfortunes in such attempt, the fine voices of young men being instructed in a part song at the end of the room made some amends. The institution seems devoted to most praiseworthy social purposes. In a certain way caste is less strong in Russia than in England; for if outward deference from a servant is considerably more marked than that to which we are accustomed, yet the Russian nature, being both warm and impulsive, produces a greater fellow-feeling between man and man. At the same time there is no mingling of high and low. The artisan and moujik and small tradesman had a monopoly of every 'traktir' into which I peeped for purposes of observation. Sometimes in such places a regular entertainment was provided.

Through Russia in War-time

Thus a couple of young men played national airs or more ambitious music upon concertinas, or the customers contentedly drank their tchai, at little tables, during the clash and reverberating din of a huge mechanical organ. But I never saw what is called a "well-dressed" person in such a place. However kindly disposed a prosperous and educated Russian may be toward the humble, between them exists a deep gulf. The species of equality which obtains in the newer Anglo-Saxon countries, where all are educated, will long be here impossible.

Whoever explores a great Russian city must not be fastidious if he wishes to satisfy his hunger. It is hard for a stranger to find a good restaurant half a mile away from the Nèvsky, though in its neighbourhood his wants are easily satisfied. In a comfortable luncheon establishment opposite the Kazan Cathedral, through windows open in delightful weather, one could watch the passers-by of all sorts, from civilians and officials to bemedalled and whiskered or bearded military officers, even, perhaps, a group of Caucasian auxiliaries, picturesque with black astrakhan hats, blue tcherkess and breeches, polished high-boots, and curved dagger.

From the day I entered Russia until that on which I left, my nationality, like that of any other stranger, often aroused suspicion, which circumstance was as it should be among a patriotic people, yet the fact that no rudeness fell to my lot showed I moved among a folk restrained and sensible. Occasionally I heard myself spoken of as a 'Nyèmetz' or German, and one day at a restaurant, when he had received an

Petrograd

order for a plate of ‘telyátinnoo’ or veal, the waiter thought to test me. He asked if I desired a ‘schnitzel,’ a term familiar to my ear, since in the distant past I studied in Vienna. As in my answer I used readily the word he suggested, he retreated perturbed and, consulting with his fellows, looked upon me askance. However, next day I ostentatiously spread upon my table a little English-Russian phrase-book, news of which proceeding appeared to satisfy the staff.

Just as the service at hotels and restaurants is above reproach, often luxurious (thus I recall the profound attentiveness of a solemnly dignified waiter in irreproachable black who, standing nearly opposite, directed his whole care to me during the breakfast hour at a Petrograd hotel), so the cost of living in the capital is moderate and the fare good. At the luncheon hour in several establishments two attractively served dishes are provided for the sum of one rouble. Wisely the Tsar ordained, early in the war’s history, that spirits and wine should not be drunk. But refreshing liquids are obtainable, such as the generally dark and opaque kvass, manufactured from slightly fermenting barley or rye; or ‘kliùkvenny,’ which is deliciously flavoured with cranberry; or ‘citro,’ a superior lemonade. The non-intoxicants can be costly. Thus, in some elegant dining-rooms offering customers music for the soul as well as meat for the body, seeing opposite me a small flask of inviting look, I had it opened, and found the dark, syrupy contents to possess a flavouring suggestive of paregoric. For this preparation,

Through Russia in War-time

called ‘Frazno,’ the charge was more than that made for the meal. As on the Continent generally, the first meal in Russia is of the lightest, and often I took it comfortably enough in a convenient and fashionable café, whose walls are resplendent with frescoes of various nymphs. Here could be perused an English newspaper, something under a fortnight old, and generally with a few inches of its space obliterated by the Censor. But sometimes I would enter a less airy establishment, a café where the prosperity of the waiters, often reputedly ‘Tatars, appeared phenomenal. Sleek, shaven of scalp and face, and adequately attentive to customers’ needs, they yet seemed to be conferring a favour. When it came to paying these men for ‘tchai’ or ‘kòfye,’ ‘pyròzhenoye’ or ‘moròzhenoye’ (tea, coffee, pastry, or an ice), they would produce portentously swollen purses whence to draw change. The plutocrats could be cruel. Thus, one day, the individual bringing at my request the *Russkoye Slòvo*, that I might spell out a few words of Russian war news, audaciously said I could not understand it; and this to an enthusiast who had once gathered the meaning of two lines of the paper without opening his dictionary! Yet the fellow had shown himself capable of better things, giving me readily, on a previous occasion, some needed information.

A foreigner not speaking Russian is thrown a good deal upon his own resources, especially during such closure of the best places of entertainment as prevailed in Petrograd in the year 1915. But there were good “moving pictures” to be seen and, at

Petrograd

a Summer Garden, I witnessed the greater part of a diverting comedy entitled, "The False Marquis," so well played that I could understand and enjoy the situations. Meanwhile, in the same grounds, a troupe of gipsies gave a concert and, on yet another stage, occurred an exhibition of wrestling. It was rather sad to see a negro get the better of a powerful white man who, being unable, I presume from exhaustion, to avoid his opponent's fierce slaps, was next lifted in the air and brought down fairly and squarely on his back. Walking home on that evening, the twenty-first of June, I was able to read a newspaper in the unilluminated street at eleven o'clock. Apparently Petrograd is a very orderly city, and I saw but one violent deed, and that in amusing circumstances. On the Litèini Prospèkt, a fine thoroughfare containing many second-hand bookshops, a man wearing dark goggles was feeling his way along the middle of the pavement by the aid of a thick staff. But a young workman meeting him uttered some jeering words, whereupon the afflicted person reached round and struck so resounding a blow on the offender's skull that it was audible afar, yet produced no untoward result. Occasionally, some fine sight, such as a fire-engine drawn by four horses galloping abreast, made me wish for my camera, but I soon learnt that its use was out of the question. With laudable energy, but lack of prudence, and all unaware that Petrograd is technically a fortress owing to the existence of Peter the Great's famous stronghold on the right bank of the Nevà, I took pictures of St. Isaac's

Through Russia in War-time

Cathedral and the Admiralty, and sought to have my negatives developed. At the sight of the apparatus, the shopman trembled, and earnestly advised me to bear it home and not let it be seen again, which items of counsel I followed, feeling uncomfortable as I walked down the Nèvsky, and, for some little while afterwards, given to meditate how best, if I had been less fortunate, I should have produced the three thousand roubles fine, or endured the six months' durance, to which my act had made me liable. Nor was there any lack of alertness on the part of those who should scan strangers, even an overcoat carried upon my arm being sufficient to awake the interest of a gorodovòi, when I made an excursion to Petrograd's favourite resort, "The Islands." These have especial charm, because among them a lavish frequency of stream and rustic bridge enhances the beauty of woodland scenes. Here the visitor can walk for miles along shady paths and roads or, if he like, diverge to little level glades. He comes upon handsome 'dàtchas' and delightful residences, mostly of harmonious design. With such a resource and propinquity to waterways, often picturesquely enlivened by the gleaming sails of numerous yachts, the city is indeed blest.

While journeying to Moscow I had the advantage of conversation with three fellow-travellers, of whom one was an engineer visiting his country property for the week-end. Friendly and polite, he several times reverted wonderingly to a recent attention, for he had received unaccountably a copy of an English engineering journal. Another gentleman

Petrograd

spoke without enthusiasm of British enterprise. Sent to London on a mission concerning the erection of waterworks for a city of two hundred thousand inhabitants, he encountered stern demands for bankers' recommendations, and returned home, at the end of a few weeks, dispirited. Almost immediately his brother, a chief official of the distant city in question, was visited, much to his astonishment, by the representative of a German firm which, having chanced to hear of the project, wished to consider it forthwith in all its bearings, and soon engaged to carry out the undertaking. The third passenger was a Cossack, with whom I found myself alone the next morning. He explained how the soldier's service is relieved by periods of peaceful occupation, and described proudly the endurance of his men, who each carry three hundred cartridges. He had been twice wounded in the war, but I asked, now as always, no questions whatever of a military nature. Instead, I was delighted to learn from this heavily moustached officer in a foot regiment the names of several species of forest trees, whose foliage he kindly and cleverly drew for me.

CHAPTER V

MOSCOW

IN the Empire's old capital, Moscow, which is the centre of Great Russia in the north, as opposed to Little Russia in the south and White Russia in the west, events of surpassing historical interest, despite frequent conflagrations and awful havoc of enemies, are recalled by many wonderful buildings. Long ago Vladìmir lost its pristine importance and Nòvgorod its prosperity ; Kìev thrives and enjoys a specially holy renown ; but Moscow shines with a steady and increasing splendour. The city is not only the result of untiring activity on the part of autocratic rulers, but a symbol of the spirit distinguishing the people through many centuries. For though till recently the Tsar, aided by the Bureaucracy and wielding absolute power, has not asked the help of a popular deliberative assembly, and though even now the mass of his subjects remain uneducated and backward in ideas, the more thoughtful and well-informed Moscovites have continually evinced a determination to advance. Reflecting on their country's rapid and manifold progress since semi-barbaric times, they are hopeful of a magnificent future. As Moscow is Russia of

Moscow

both past and present, and contrasts sharply with all the cities he has previously known, the foreign traveller is thrilled when he enters it.

Leaving the railway-station, I crossed broad boulevards, conveying, except as to their size, no striking impressions, for in some respects Moscow falls short. Many of the houses are of low elevation, though picturesque on account of diversity and varying bright tints. Nevertheless, in the Red Square and the neighbourhood of the Great Theatre and the City Hall, imposing effects combine with spaciousness. Moreover, large buildings, such as the University and the Historical Museum and the Imperial Foundling Hospital, rivet the attention. However, the fame of the city rests on its size, commerce, history, the ancient walls and towers, the many-cupolaed churches, the vast mediaeval monasteries, and the unique Kremlin. The fashionable thoroughfares, lined with fine shops, did not seem to compare very favourably with resorts of like nature in most great capitals. But the visitor finds a recompense in many busy and crowded streets, where the fur cap, sheepskin coat, bast shoes, or top-boots of the *moujik* are in evidence, beside the felt hat and dark cloth raiment affected by men of the middle class. The long brown robes of the priest, who, with his flowing locks, is usually a commanding figure, frequently impress the eye ; and the great white or black lamb-skin head covering and the elegant caftan, adorned with cartridge cases, on the breast of natives of the Caucasus, add to the general variety. While Armenians,

Through Russia in War-time

Greeks, even Persians, may sometimes be met with, Tatars are common.

Among Moscow's several moderate hills, that which, overlooking the narrow, winding Moskvà river, is surmounted by the Kremlin and Kitàigorod (Inner City) challenges instant attention. The newcomer, approaching probably from the Voskresèn-skiya Plòshchad, next the Great Theatre square, is confronted by white fortress walls, marked at intervals by pyramidal green towers and arched portals. So is enclosed the ancient and central part of Moscow, while the neighbouring Kremlin has its own strange battlements and even more striking gateways and towers. Before essaying an entrance to these famous places through the double-towered Iberian gate, I visited a tiny chapel between the two archways, and watched an endless succession of pious visitors anxious to touch with the lips in devout homage a most sacred and famous ikòn, the Iberian Madonna. So dark is the face beneath its gilded covering that only with difficulty could I distinguish the features. Sometimes a skilfully made copy is substituted, as when, with much pomp, the holy picture departs in a grand equipage to exert healing power at a bedside, for which favour the relatives of the sick person pay a large sum. But ensconced all over Moscow are other little shrines, coming near which the good citizen uncovers and crosses himself or goes within for prayer, and perhaps leaves a gift.

Now, passing under the gateway, I entered the Red Square, a great open space, with the Kremlin



THE SACRED PIGEONS. THE RED SQUARE, MO COW.



Moscow

on the right and the Kitàigorod on the left. Here, in the heart of the old city, while watching some women, who from baskets on their arm fed sacred pigeons, I could not but muse on history.

Whence have the Russians sprung in the tolerably remote past? Eastern Slavs, and of the Aryan breed, they are not well known to us in their pristine stage. But it seems that, after emigrating from Bulgaria or the Carpathians, they inhabited a vast level region between the country of the Scythians on the south and that of the Finns on the north; and, while having as neighbours toward the west representatives of the Polish and Lithuanian races, they vaguely approached in the opposite direction the region of nomad Tatars. Of necessity, in the course of centuries, there has been a mingling of blood. Yet the tall, white-skinned, blue-eyed, and full-bearded Great Russians, who eventually overcame their Tatar conquerors, have long proved themselves a distinct and virile people. In early times they worshipped the sun, but later a chief deity, called Pèrun, the god of thunder. Believing that shades of the dead become 'russalki' and enter water, they thought fit to burn corpses in order that the departed may more easily reach their own proper abode. But the Scythians themselves, on the northern shores of the Black Sea, were of Slav race, information concerning whom has been gathered from the tumuli in which their rulers were buried. At the death of a chief his weapons, with many gold ornaments, were laid beside the bier in the central

Through Russia in War-time

chamber. It has even been learnt from the frieze of an exquisite vase that nomads, living in southern Muscovy in prehistoric times, resembled in appearance the Russians of to-day.

As to history, Nestor, an early monkish annalist, says that people of Nòvgorod (situated north-west of Moscow) invited Rurik, a Norseman, in 862 A.D., to come and reign over them. Under such rule not only was Kìev conquered, but Christianity there established through Byzantine influence. In the early story of the new religion the names of St. Olga and the apostle Vladìmir shine, although the latter had set up a worship of pagan images, to be forsaken by him when embracing the Faith. Even now, in many parts of Russia, certain heathen beliefs have force among the peasants. In spite of wars the country thrrove, till, early in the thirteenth century, it suffered a fearful invasion from Mongols and Tatars under Genghis Khan, whose Eastern hordes, by driving with them their herds and living chiefly on flesh, showed that they possessed a secret of mobility. However, despite repeated Tatar attacks and the forcible exercise of Tatar suzerainty from Kazàn, Russian princes made steady headway at Vladìmir, Nòvgorod, and Moscow, of whom, in time, the last of the three attained pre-eminence. Prince Alexander Nèvski of Vladìmir vanquished the Swedes on the Nevà, and his son (a prince of Moscow) was a forbear of Ivàn III, who did much for the Empire of Muscovy. This Tsar not only routed the Golden Horde, so called from the magnificence of their camp (in Turkic





THE GATE OF THE REDEEMER. MOSCOW.

To face p. 73.

Moscow

‘Urdu’) on the Volga, but overcame Nòvgorod and Perm and Karèlia. About this time (the epoch of our ruthless Henry VIII and his ally Francis I, art’s devotee) many of the Kremlin’s important buildings took their present form.

Happily the Crim Tatar army, which devastated the city as late as the end of the sixteenth century, could not penetrate the Kremlin, and left it to afford a surpassing spectacle. Yet none who enters the huge Red Square on his way to the chief glory of the city by the Iberian Gate can avoid first glancing awhile at St. Basil’s Cathedral, even though it lies somewhat far in front of him. A truly strange and phenomenal building! as each decides when, probably resisting a temptation to dally, he soon determines to enter the Kremlin. Looking to the right, he sees a long, very high, red wall, one side of the square. The battlements are unusual, the upright portion having an upper surface shaped like the letter V. Each of the two mighty towers of red brick which now confront him has a spire, and over one gateway a picture of the Redeemer reveals itself, and reminds him of a rigid custom. So he uncovers and passes through this portal, which forms the chief entrance. Perhaps at first he is disappointed, for the buildings upon his right, a palace and a monastery, are neither of them astonishing. Then, coming upon the great bell, that weighs the trifle of two hundred tons, he finds it dwarfed by propinquity to the tremendous tower of Ivàn Velìky. However, a mere piece of the rim broken off by the fall

Through Russia in War-time

of heavy timber during a fire is taller than any man, so the visitor, being reasonable, is satisfied, especially when he considers the difficulties of such a stupendous casting. It is said that the structure had previously suffered because ladies threw jewels into the molten metal and thereby weakened it; also that gold increased the sweetness and aided the surprising and booming mellowness of Moscow's bells. Great and small, these are wonderful, like the voices of Russia's priests and choristers.

Four hundred and fifty steps, reputedly, for I did not count them, lead to the summit of the great tower that, like many another in Russia, recalls by its succession of narrow stories the Mongol's pagoda. Whoever climbs up makes a considerable and near acquaintance with bells, but at last can survey the wonderful scene around him. White rectangular churches, each with cupolas gilded, or green, or blue, or starred; white palaces upon a bank of winding Moskvà; an immense white hospital for foundlings; tortuous streets, great open places, concentric boulevards; huge monasteries guarded with high walls and round, machicolated towers; hills whence Napoleon's insatiable glance first was directed at the prize for which his veterans had bled—such, set in a wide plain, delight and stir the visitor who looks down from the summit of Ivàn Velìky. Yet perhaps the most beautiful sight is the marble Church of the Redeemer. The graceful shape and poise of its gilded dome, a hundred feet in diameter, has for



THE GREAT BELL. MOSCOW.



Moscow

me a transcendent charm. With the outline of neither a cupola nor the ordinary dome, it possesses somewhat the nature of both, and a beauty set off by the majestic harmonies of gleaming walls.

Russia has a long, snowy winter-time, a summer short and sunny, and a visit to the Kremlin is perhaps more romantic and stimulating when the mercury stays day after day at a low level than when its height brings languor. However, the chief glory of the Kremlin, the 'Oospènsky Sobòr' (the Cathedral of the Assumption), a building comparatively small according to Western ideas, afforded a grateful refuge from heat and glare. Five gilded domes on round towers, which, with the white walls, are pierced by a few high, narrow lights, without coolness and darkness, sides and pillars generously showing figured saints, within ! The frescoes deal much with the ideas of mediaeval religion, for angels and monks, even knights, appear in them ; while, too, scenes from the Holy Virgin's life, the early councils of the Greek Church, and the Last Judgment, have a share in the representations. But, abundantly as exist here the holiest imaginable reliques, nothing exerts so compelling an attraction as the great ikonostàs, which, with certain sacred objects, is said to contain five tons of gold. Almost with deeper feelings of awe are the faithful stirred when they see, to the left of the holy door, the Vladìmir Virgin, a picture reputedly the work of St. Luke. But, to impress good Russians still further, in the centre of the floor is pointed out to them the spot, between pillars, where is crowned

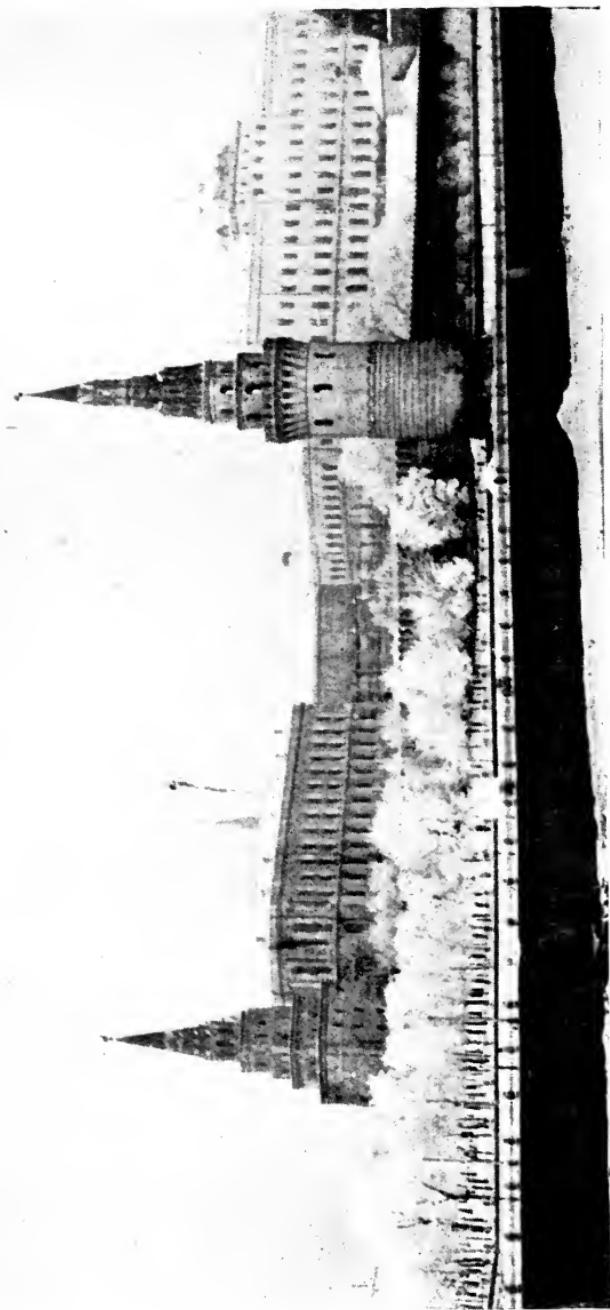
Through Russia in War-time

each Tsar, elect of God. Near by stand, of somewhat similar design, the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, where early Tsars lie buried, and that of the Annunciation, under whose roof each ruler is baptized and married.

Within a stone's throw of these churches rises a palace for the mightiest in the land. Wars and fire, enemies and accident, have destroyed the most ancient dwellings of the first princes of Moscow, and now rises instead the Great Palace, a modern building with splendid staircases and rooms, many of them magnificent as to size and decoration. But at hand is another edifice, erected several centuries ago, the Granovitaya Palàta, where, under low vaulting supported in the centre of a hall by a rectangular pier, the Tsar dines in state with all the great personages who have assisted at the ceremony of coronation. Of somewhat later date and possibly more interesting is the Tèrem, upper additions to which were made by the first Romànov, the Tsar Michael. The small apartments are distributed over several floors and include dining, reception, and throne rooms, a bedchamber, and an oratory. Above is a larger apartment for the Council. Peter the Great, as also the ill-fated Alexis, sometimes lived in the Tèrem, which contains many objects connected with the career of early members of the ruling Dynasty. Clearly, indeed, the contrast between the Tèrem and the Grand Palace marks three centuries of progress !

Eloquent of a longer advance gleam various antiquities and trophies in the Treasury, a store-house

THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW.





Moscow

of gold, silver, and jewels, significant of Russia's Imperial development. Here rests a crown of Grand Prince Vladìmir Monamakh, who married a daughter of England's second Harold. In an armour-room may be seen helmets and cuirasses of Grand Princes and Tsars, also accoutrements of the 'boyàrs,' or nobles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among weapons shine Asiatic swords and daggers. Banners can be seen of the Stryèltzi, that military guild suppressed fearfully by Peter the Great. Poltàva yields a harvest of weapons. The throne of a Persian prince is upon view, and another of a Khan of Khiva. As for the aggressive military genius who penetrated to Moscow in 1812, his overthrow is recorded by hundreds of cannon set round the Kremlin's arsenal. Gazing at these once more, as well as at a mighty piece of ordnance, the Tsar cannon, cast in 1586, I noticed some persons drawn to a new focus of interest. Four heavy siege pieces, of a light-coloured gun-metal, directed at a high angle and, as to two of them, much injured near the muzzle, stood as marks of Russian prowess, and German combativeness, in the present terrible Great War. There are other massive gates and buildings upon the almost sacred area, such as a Court of Justice, which I should have liked to enter, barracks, and a very rich monastery facing the Senate Square. Inspection of the new memorial to liberator Alexander II, a beautiful work in a splendid position, presented no difficulties. Beneath a pillared canopy, the bronze statue of the murdered Tsar turns toward the heart of the Kremlin,

Through Russia in War-time

while behind him an arcade, the under surface of whose roof exhibits in mosaic the succession of rulers from St. Vladìmir onwards, affords the visitor an opportunity to gaze on the Moskvà as it courses silently through a city that has witnessed exceptionally violent deeds and tremendous events.

Returning to the Red Square through the Redeemer's Gate, I marvelled at the boldness and originality of St. Basil's Cathedral. The designer, determining upon a startling combination of qualities, summoned strangeness and variety of shape, design, and colouring to create a temple which should tell Heaven of man's gratitude for Nature's bounty. Eleven cupolas and spires crown as many small and dark chapels crowded together, but distributed in two stories, the whole, despite crudeness of tints, producing a result highly effective. The employment of pillars and arches and lines inclined at a sharp angle is here altogether subsidiary to that of towering bulb-like masses, fantastically imitative. Conical scales and graceful curves and spiral markings suggest fruits and vegetables ; among others, the pineapple and onion. The beholder stands astonished, perhaps dismayed : yet, if he has visited Petrograd, he knows that the Russian people do not regard St. Basil's as a freak, for the religious edifice lately raised on the spot where Alexander II was slain honours not only the memory of the great Tsar, but idiosyncrasies of this Moscow church. So the Westerner, accustomed to classic and Gothic architecture, perforce acknowledges the existence of



CATHEDRAL OF ST. BASIL. MOSCOW.



Moscow

novel and remarkable ideals. For any narrow-mindedness or hide-bound condition which chances to afflict him he finds sound correctives in Russia. Having turned my eyes to a wall where hung some chain armour, said to have been worn by Ivàn IV, who not only commemorated the virtues of the monk Basil by building this cathedral, but shone forth as a great conqueror, I stepped again into the Red Square. Near at hand in it rises a circular stone platform, the Lòbnoye Myèsto (Place of a Skull), where the same Tsar once made confession of his misdeeds.

What is, in brief, the story of Ivàn, called "Gròznwy," or the Terrible, the ferocity of whose nature seems unquestionable? Left early an orphan, he was upheld in cruelty by tutors, and, when a boy, caused an arrogant noble to be worried to death by hounds. Then, for a while, two priests, carrying on the Government ably, exercised on the young Tsar a softening influence. So, during a period of thirteen years, and until the death of Anastasia Romànov his wife, he thought of Muscovy as a country to be raised, and led armies successfully against Kazàn and Astrakhan. Endowed with great mental powers and vast energy, Ivàn would have introduced skilled foreign workmen into his dominions had not efforts in such direction been thwarted by Charles V of Germany. But, though not displaying an evil disposition toward his subjects during this period, he was, alas! to become a bloody despot, especially towards the 'boyàrs,' and as ready to take life or pursue with agony as some of his victims

Through Russia in War-time

proved to endure the worst afflictions silently. A princely messenger having brought Ivàn a defiant message from a fugitive, the monarch pinned the courageous man's foot to the ground with a spear and, when the letter had been fully read, delivered him to the tormentor. In the course of time the Metropolitan, who reproved the Tsar for his foul deeds, suffered death for his temerity. Then the ruler surrounded himself with a strong band of powerful ruffians, picked men or 'oprìtchniki' and, sending these in advance, journeyed to Nòvgorod, a more considerable place up to that time than Moscow. At first feasted by the inhabitants, Ivàn forthwith began their systematic slaughter. Every day, as is said, a thousand were destroyed by various horrible means. But the Tsar carried back to the capital large numbers, and insisted that the Muscovites should be present at the barbarous executions. Such a device as alternate immersion in boiling and cold water, till the death of the victim, was one among countless ingenious methods of pandering to his cruelty, whose skill as a torturer proved colossal and endless. Having allowed the English to open up trade with Archangel, he found them very good friends, for they supplied him with guns and powder when the Tatars and Swedes and Poles bade fair to gain the victory. No more considerate than a Bedouin of the desert, and insatiate concerning women, he thirsted to degrade them. But his character in such respect must have spread abroad, since a titled English lady, dreading to make a dangerous match, begged Queen Elizabeth not to





A COSSACK. MOSCOW.

To face p. 81.

Moscow

marry her to the Tsar. This strange man, having killed in a passion his beloved son Ivàn, desired, in the pangs of remorse, to abdicate and, before his death, became a monk.

Then the last of the Rurik stock ascended the throne, but the chief person in the country was Borìs Godunòv, a boyàr of Tatar blood, under whose direction, in order to protect the small landholders, peasants, a prey to nomadic habits, were forbidden to leave the land. With such beginning of serfdom, once more in man's history, a well-intentioned deed led to ill results.

But, behold Moscow at the head of the Greek Church ! For the Metropolitan of Moscow was consecrated as Patriarch by an ecclesiastic of the higher rank, who had been driven from Constantinople by the Turks. Soon hideous troubles overwhelmed the city : a famine so awful that, as is recorded, human flesh was sold for food; a civil war and efforts of an impostor to mount the throne ; also massacres and constant bloodshed. The neighbouring Poles, at that time a powerful nation, having supported a second impostor, terrible fighting occurred in Moscow. While these foreigners garrisoned the Kremlin, an army of Don - Cossacks arrived. A former butcher, Cosma Minin, chose Prince Pogarski as leader of a determined band of peasants, and through a combination of forces the Poles were expelled. Then, in 1613, by the people gathered together around the Lòbnoye Myèsto in the Red Square, a boyàr of good name, Michael Romànov, first of the present Dynasty, was elected Tsar.

Through Russia in War-time

Various important events customarily occurred at this spot, such as the proclamation of the monarch's ukàzes, and the reading the Gospels before Easter by the Patriarch. On such occasions the ecclesiastic next mounted an ass which was led by the Tsar to the most sacred cathedral in the Kremlin. But Peter the Great objected to this act of homage on the part of Sovereign to Church ; whence, and for other reasons, he abolished the patriarchate. The Lòbnoye Myèsto became also the scene of Peter's vengeance on the ancient militia, the Stryèltsi, guilty of rebellious conduct, easily controlled in his absence by Gordon the Scotsman. For many days the most horrible forms of torture were practised, not only by the Tsar, but by the reluctant boyàrs in obedience to his fierce commands.

Realizing the infliction of punishments so extreme as those meted out by Ivàn IV and Peter the Great, the wondering humanitarian asks himself, " What is the meaning of it all ? " Well aware that certain cruel natures delight in gazing on pain, he yet recognizes that, in past times, a practical and almost universal way of deterring evildoers, or the rebellious, has been infliction of bodily torment. In the early days of Egypt and onwards even offending nobles were beaten. A mere sentence of death did not sufficiently reward the worst malefactors in many ages and countries. So, until the French Revolution, many a criminal in Paris lingered on the wheel. Even in England political prisoners were drawn on a hurdle, hanged, and quartered. We must believe that Ivàn IV and other Russian Tsars determined

Moscow

to strike, throughout their dominions, terror so great that few should dare question Imperial wisdom and might. Having assumed a position of infallibility, these rulers were no more moved by pity than if they had been artillerymen in the heat of battle. Faced by a question of life or death for themselves, they accepted no risks, nor considered things from a culprit's or their opponent's standpoint, as many modern rulers have learned to do through diffusion of sympathy and knowledge. The criminal and even many a rebel, in our day, is considered seldom a fiendish creature, and often not very unlike ourselves ; and a machinery of courts of justice and prisons has been set up which makes the penalty of wrongdoing less acute, partly in the interest of society's feelings. But Ivàn and Peter, proving adepts in devising new and more horrible methods of torture, actually assisted at their infliction! Wherefore, it would appear that rage, which, like jealousy, blinds, could annul in these rulers a sense of what was due from persons of exalted position. Proving, upon occasion, unable to restrain vengeful feelings, they both judged and executed. Nothing more clearly shows the immense strides of Russian civilization than a comparison of such autocrats with sovereigns crowned in the Kremlin during the past century.

CHAPTER VI

MOSCOW (*continued*)

IN the Red Square, opposite the Kremlin, stands an enormous three-floored, glass-covered gallery of which Moscow is proud. Here purchasers can satisfy multiform requirements without discomfort in unfavourable weather. Much business is transacted in the surrounding neighbourhood, where, as might be expected, antiquated abodes constantly give place to nests of offices. Yet, within and under the ancient city wall, one can still bargain for a time-worn ikòn in little stalls which may soon become things of the past. Near at hand, in a quarter rapidly adapting itself to mercantile needs, runs the street called Varvàrka, containing an old house of considerable interest, for on the same site and in a similar dwelling was born and lived the Romànov founder of the present line of Tsars. The compact, though by no means large, edifice possesses several floors, the surface material of the story on the street being left undressed, while the windows and a stone staircase on the inner side recall Florentine art, and there is a four-sided pyramidal tower. The house, which is remarkable for its diminutive doors, may be considered, as

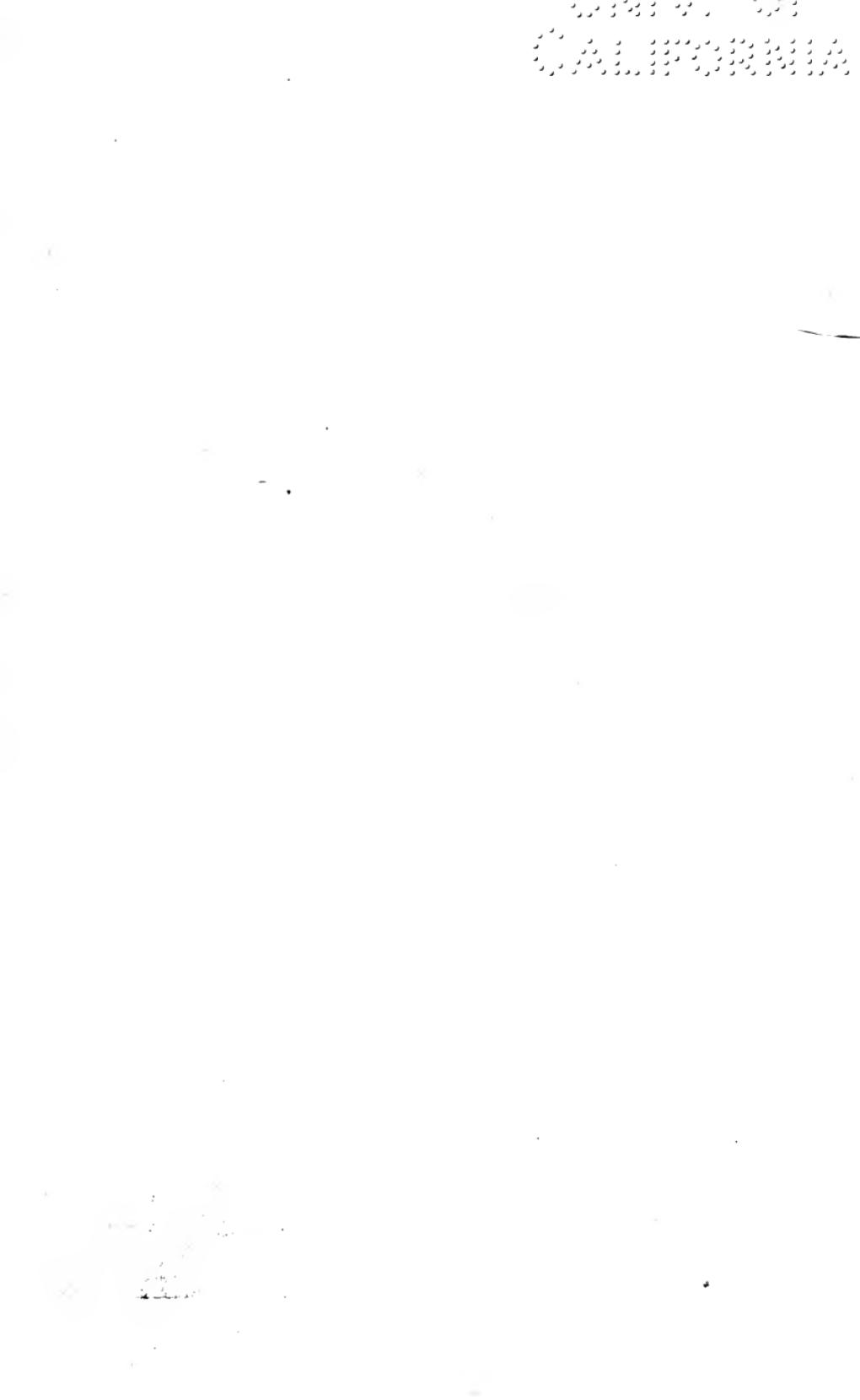
Moscow

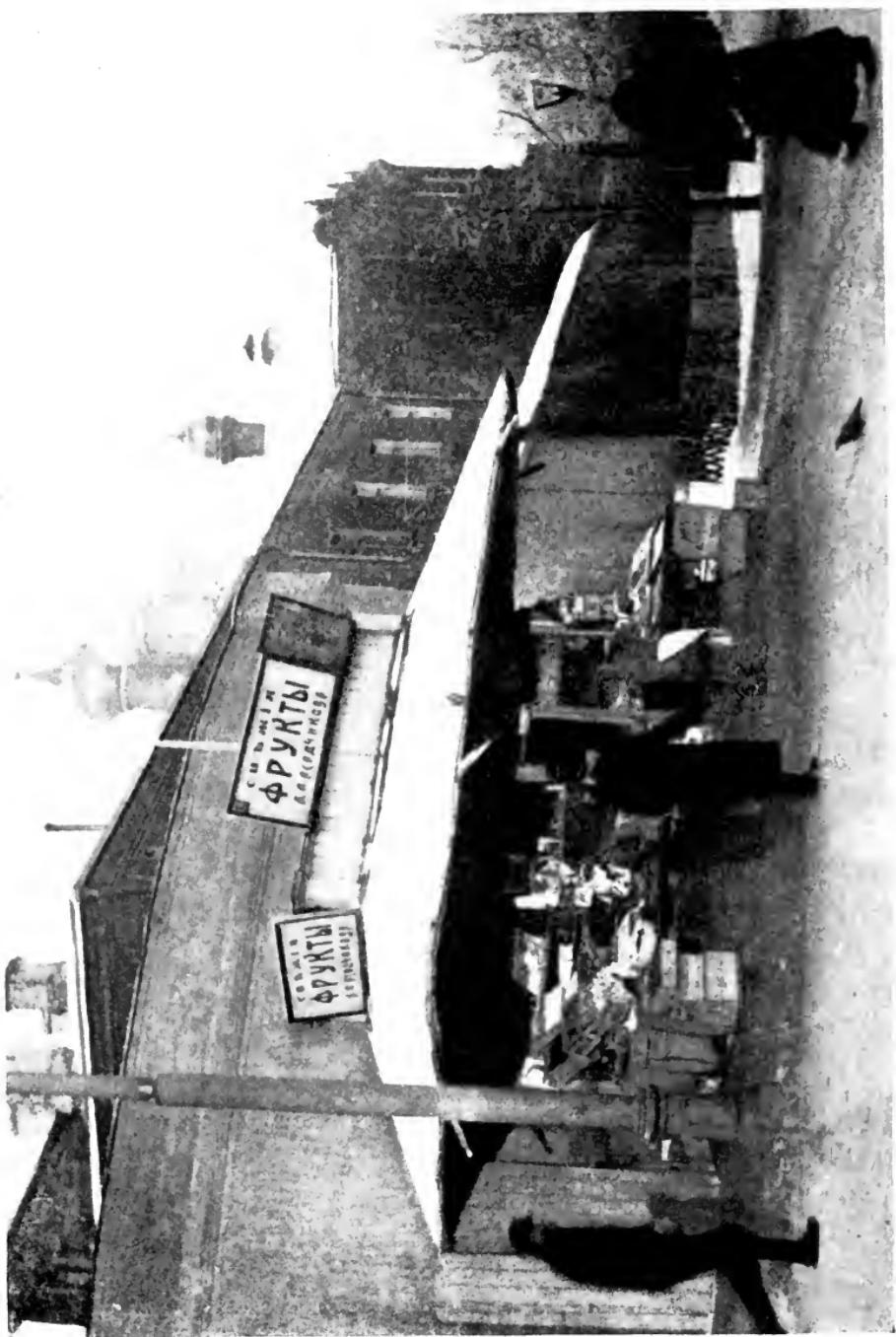
fitted up, an exemplar of the great boyàrs' homes in the sixteenth century. There are, in the basement, cellars ; next above them, kitchens ; and still higher the fully furnished apartments of the boyàr and his family, with even a small nursery, rich in the possession of a child's toys and spelling-book.

The visitor's attention is compelled by a remarkable institution in the Red Square, where, opposite St. Basil's Cathedral, but at some distance away, for the open space is vast, rise the pointed towers of the Historical Museum, an imposing and graceful building, throughout of red brick. Overwhelming proofs are here revealed of civilization's advance since the prehistoric period, for in a series of rooms is set forth skilfully, by specimens and paintings, a story of early Russian life. Not only has Herodotus much to say definitely of the Scythians, who, several centuries before Christ's era, inhabited the northern shores of the Black Sea, whither also other races came later, especially Greek colonists from Asia Minor ; but in few parts of the world have tumuli or barrows revealed so many tokens as along the course of the Lower Dneiper. As a result, exquisite delineations of the rude, mostly nomadic, inhabitants of the southern steppes have been recognized on beautiful vases now in the Hermitage Museum in Petrograd. But here, in Moscow, are exhibited such objects as stone hammers, flint arrow-heads, even bones of an extinct beast of the elephant type, while a large fresco on a wall shows a mammoth captured in

Through Russia in War-time

a pit, and making a good fight against primitive man armed with stones and bludgeons. A more recent age, that of bronze, is represented in a great painting by Siemiradzki. In the stern of a boat, so large as to be almost a ship, raised on logs and with a dragon's head at the prow, lies in state the body of a chief about to undergo cremation. The scene is laid at Bolgàri, on the Volga, not far from Kazàn, where, a few months later, I was able to inspect many specimens of archæological interest. The artist, who has good authority for the details, has placed by the chief's side his armour, sword, and quiver of arrows, and bound his charger near by to a post. A wild-looking woman, with long dark tresses, brandishes a broad dagger, preparatory to slaying a beautiful girl-wife, and perhaps herself, at the dead man's feet. Helmeted warriors in furs wave battle-axes and swords. A white-bearded bard touches a many-stringed lyre, while a nude and splendid male slave is led to the funeral pyre, and behind, heading a throng, a high, horned idol, distinguished by human features, directs a ghastly stare on the spectacle. The first Slavs followed a nomadic life in clans or tribes under a definite ruler, and here stand several huge stone objects of their worship. Babi, or idols of the iron age, from Ekaterinoslåv are visible, besides especially fine models of famous tombs, such as that of Kul-Oba, near Kertch, a historic city at the eastern extremity of the Crimea. Early Russian ecclesiastical art, which steadily developed from the period when Byzantine Chris-





STREET SCENE. MOSCOW.

Moscow

tianity was introduced, is represented by mosaics and crosses like those adorning the Cathedral of St. Sophia at Kìev, and by reproductions and drawings telling of ancient churches at Nòvgorod and Vladìmir. As for modern art, in Moscow I have visited an exhibition of pictures whose fine colouring, freshness, and idyllic atmosphere revealed much power and feeling. Moreover, with such delightful studies of Nature competed works showing deep psychologic insight.

In many parts of Russia busy scenes occur in market-places on our rest day. But the Sunday market of Moscow is famous. Following the Lubyànska upwards from the bustling Lubyànsk Square, across the shady inner boulevards, where in cold weather I have seen uniformed schoolboys and their little sisters enjoy the exercise of sliding down wooden ramps, the visitor reaches the Sùkharef Tower. This strange-looking octagonal structure, surmounting galleries and an archway over the road, reaches a height of two hundred feet. It was erected by Peter the Great in honour of a regiment of Stryèltsi and their commander, who stayed loyal to him when their comrades favoured the regent Sophia. Here, over a considerable length of the broad boulevard, is held on Sunday an open market, affording a truly remarkable sight, since enormous quantities of very diverse goods are exposed for sale, and attract a great concourse. Upon the shelves of innumerable small second-hand bookstalls I noticed occasionally English or French books. Beyond, many

Through Russia in War-time

vendors of calicoes, white and coloured, did a brisk business in wares offered on rude tables. It is rumoured that old ikôns and other antiques may be favourably obtained in these quarters ; but no such treasures came my way, though a distinguished-looking lady keeping a store of interesting relics, near the ancient walls of the Kitâigorod, consented to sell me, at a price, a triptych in a silver filigree case, and containing three beautifully finished paintings of sacred figures—the Saviour, the Holy Mother, and the Baptist. The pleasure this ikòn has given me is enhanced by the belief, founded on the lady's word, that it belonged to an old boyàr's family.

As to the commercial importance of Moscow, it advances with extraordinary rapidity. Almost everything is made there, so that in what is perhaps, after Rome, the greatest focus on earth of the religious spirit, material prosperity develops apace. Activity reigns in chemical and metallurgical industries, and very large numbers of workers find employment in printing calicoes. Here also exist great sugar refineries. The city is a centre both for import of tea from Siberia and the export of hemp, grain, and oils to the Baltic. But, it would appear, neither has the native toiler become the Englishman's equal in skill or productiveness, nor has the Russian manager or foreman yet grown as capable and resourceful a controller and director of labour as the Briton of like status. People are kindly and obliging in Moscow. Finding it necessary after banking hours to change some money,

Moscow

I ventured, with some hesitation, to make my wants known at the counting-house of a large establishment. The senior official proved himself urbane, even liberal, so that he would have let me take away gold pieces of ten roubles instead of five for each of several half-sovereigns.

However evilly examples may gleam of severity on the part of past barbarous rulers, or at any time among an Executive threatened with revolt, the Russian is ready for good deeds and to show gratitude to the Almighty. So when Napoleon's army, having reached the ancient capital of Muscovy, was forced to withdraw because of the vengeful hostility of the peasants, God's mercy demanded acknowledgment. Therefore the inhabitants set about building a superlative church, that of the Redeemer, near the Borovitzkiya Gate, by which the invader entered the Kremlin. How human affairs, endlessly tragic, can exhibit a grotesque element! This masterpiece of sacred architecture perpetuates deliverance from soldiers of a country which has now been converted by capricious Destiny into an honoured and trusty ally! Already allusion has been made to this fane's effective outer appearance. The interior gains, not only from a generous and successful arrangement of the natural lighting, but from a lavish use of gold and white marble, especially for the ikonostas. Famous painters, choosing as their subjects the heavenly personages, great and less, and the triumphs of national heroes, have displayed well their skill within, so that, though the

Through Russia in War-time

new structure lacks the historical associations of the Kremlin, it supplies a worthy proof of Russia's religious and artistic nature.

My plans did not permit a repetition of some interesting visits made in a recent winter, but the experiences then won stayed fresh and coloured my thoughts. Being in Moscow, as it chanced, on Russian New Year's Day, I took a few miles' journey by tram to Preobrazhènskoye, in the hope of viewing a large convent which belongs to the sect of Bezpopòvsty, a chief division of the Dissenters. In this place, famous because of the regiment of Guards associated with its name, Peter the Great set up a torture-chamber and a secret court. Unlike our own religious folk who, separating from an established State Church, have often desired to simplify its formulas, the Russian Dissenter, or Raskòlnik, was the strictest maintainer of old ways and ecclesiastical customs : an opponent of the reforms introduced by the patriarch Nikon in the seventeenth century. This famous man held that the ritual of the Greek-Russian Church required purification, and that the symbolism of the Trinity should be more thoroughly insisted upon ; thus the sign of the cross must henceforth be made with three fingers instead of two. Moreover, he altered the spelling of the Saviour's name in consonance with improved knowledge. Unfortunately, many a pious mystic of that era was fanatical, hostile to those who disagreed with him, apt to see Antichrist in innovators like Nikon or Peter the Great. The people, besides retaining a fond-



A GORODOVÜI. MOSCOW.



Moscow

ness for pagan methods of interpretative divination, were acquainted with the apocalyptic number of the Beast. It was calamitous, since Nikon's alterations included a fresh mode of enumerating the centuries, and having begun to count from the beginning of the Christian dispensation instead of, as had previously been the practice, from the supposed date of the Creation, he published his reformatory edict in none other than in a year with such a suggestive number as 1666! Tragic occurrences ensued. Among a race ignorant, devout, and emotional it was held glorious to suffer persecution rather than, by departing from hallowed methods, give way to Satanic innovations. Often poor reasoners and always superstitious, the peasants would not depart from inveterate beliefs. So certain among them continued to pay fines rather than obey an ukàz of Peter the Great requiring that they should trim their beards. But to accept Nikon's modifications! Rather than submit, many suffered exile into the wilderness or the cruellest deaths under such a strenuous monarch as the victor at Poltàva, or even the Tsarina, Catherine II. The Raskòlniki, or 'breakers apart,' themselves suffered in time from schism: certain of whom, the Popòvsty, have priests and are less extreme in their views and antagonism to Church and State than are the Bezpopòvsty, a sect without regular priests and opposed to marriage. It was a great establishment of the latter branch of Dissenters which I inquired for and found at Preobrazhènskoye. A short walk, made delightful by clear air and bright

Through Russia in War-time

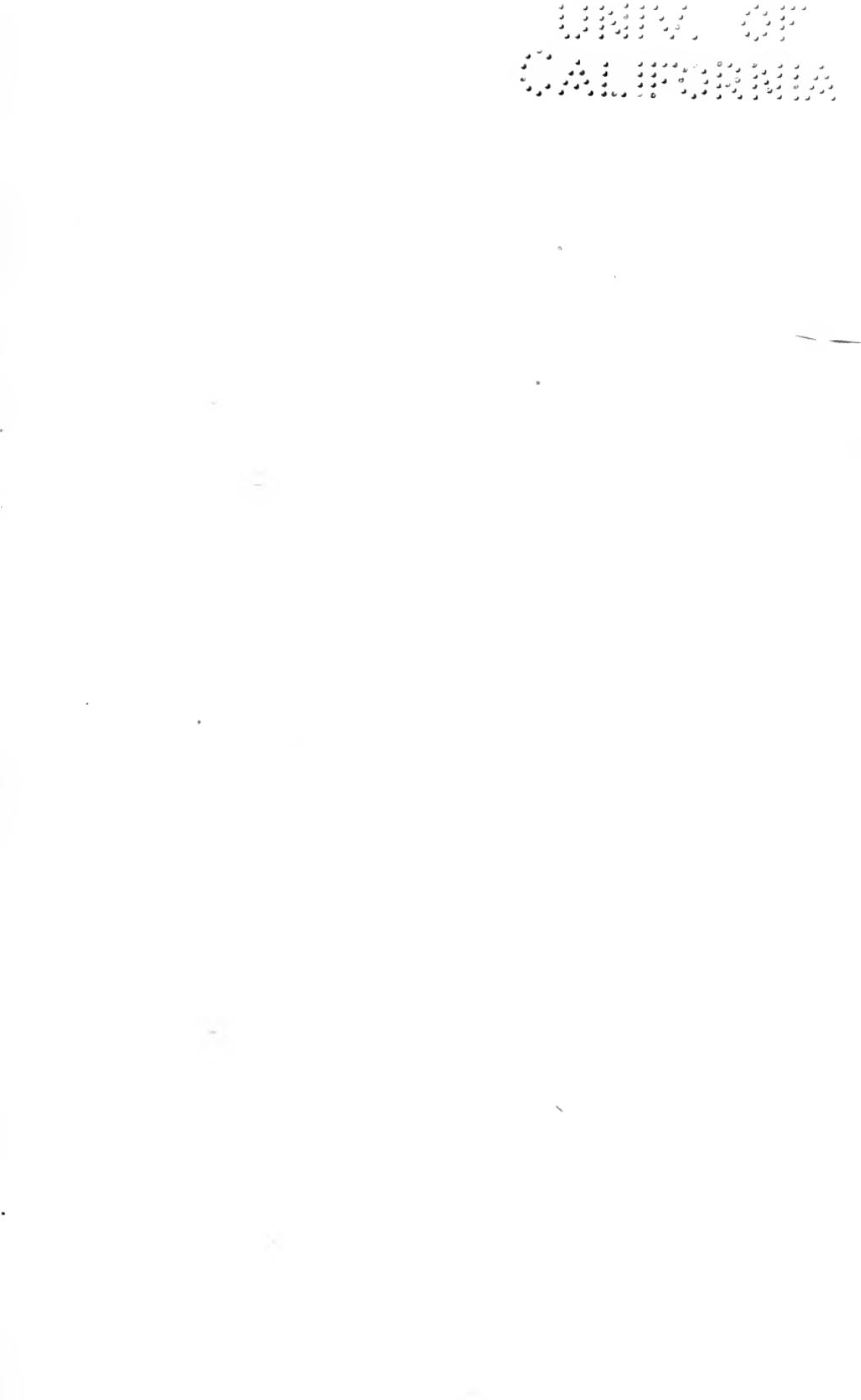
sunshine, led to the monastery, whose walls almost resemble those of a fortress. At the gateway I encountered a check, since the porter refused to admit me. Although finding his words unintelligible, I did not easily desist, having come a long way with a settled purpose. So for a time we stood facing one another somewhat comically. At last my hand sought a pocket and withdrew a twenty-kopeck piece. The gatekeeper became my friend. He delivered me into the care of a gardener, who threw down his broom and proceeded to a door under an archway and rang a bell. Now appeared a third man, in no way remarkable, who inspected me, as did also a thin, sallow-faced female from the top of a staircase. The result being favourable, the gardener led me past some conventional dwellings to a rectangular church unlike any other I have seen in Russia, for no ikonostàs, either ornate or simple, screened the altar which stood against the wall. Though a few ikòns were visible and some candelabra, the general effect was simple and severe. No service was in progress, but from an adjoining chapel sounds issued of unmelodious singing. I was naturally appreciative of the courtesy which had been extended me; at all events, a few Raskòlniki and some notion of their worship had been revealed to my eager eyes. These 'Starovèry,' or 'Old Believers,' are reputedly in several ways superior to peasants accepting the Orthodox Faith. Many wealthy Moscow merchants belong to the sect, not to be confounded with the notorious Skoptsi, who,

Moscow

interpreting almost literally the saying, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out," exhibit a tendency to self-mutilation, and seem possessed by a debased form of religious intensity. The folk called 'Klisti' (jumpers) work themselves into ecstasies, and indulge at times in hideous orgies, which can assume a cruel nature. But there exist in Russia followers of various beliefs. Thus the Molokanye, ardent students of the Scriptures, find therein a full direction for life. These people do not remunerate their ministers, and approximate to certain primitive bodies known in English-speaking countries. Leaving the Bezpopòvsty's stronghold, I retraced my steps to the village, and watched an endless succession of peasants and workpeople (for Preobrazhènskoye has large factories) who came to a shop for supplies of vodka. A single quart bottle sufficed for most of those in the queue, but some were prepared with either two flasks or a magnum. The women, of whom the crowd was mostly composed, wore shawls over their heads and dark plain clothes, while the men were generally attired in the usual round fur caps, long felt boots, and sheepskin coats with the wool turned inwards. Choosing the best 'traktir' available, which lay above a broad staircase no dirtier than many another, I drank tea and obtained something to eat, and then continued along a main road. Owing doubtless to the severe frost, a man did steady business selling water from a barrel covered with long and pretty icicles and mounted on a sleigh. Soon the road grew wide, and a fair revealed itself in full progress.

Through Russia in War-time

Besides walking up and down in threes and fours for the young girls, and standing about or buying nuts for the men and boys, the attractions were two: a roundabout with sacred banners hanging from the roof, and an exhibition of lion-taming in a booth by "Miss Cora, an Englishwoman." Very well my compatriot did her work, putting her head far enough into the lion's mouth to stir general wonder and admiration. The spectators, who mostly stood on a wooden ramp, for few enjoyed the luxury of seats, behaved quietly, and if little hilarity obtained, neither did disorder mar the scene; though in Moscow that evening I saw several men lying on the ground in a stupefied condition, one of whom received assistance from a gorodovòi. A pleasant excursion took me to some hills, situated three or four miles south of the Kremlin. The road kept through wide but ugly streets past the famous and solitary Novodyevitchi Convent, erected in the early portion of the sixteenth century to commemorate the taking of Smolensk. The walls and battlements are, to some extent, like those of the Kremlin, but their colouring of white and dark red impressed me as extraordinary. Moreover, the pinnacled gateway, loopholed walls, machicolated and alternating round and square towers, the high belfry, and the cupolaed churches offer an astonishing sight. The place is full of historical interest. Here, in retirement, lived the widow of the last Tsar of the Rurik Dynasty, and the Poles, at the height of their power, carried on a siege which left the convent almost destroyed.





THE DONSKOI CONVENT. MOSCOW.

Moscow

But how dramatic was its connection with Peter the Great, who caused three hundred favourers of Sophia to be hanged before his captive sister's window ! Farther on, my way led past some farm buildings and over snowy fields, whence rather savage dogs issued to offer me unwelcome attentions. Then, crossing the frozen Moskvà, I was able to clamber up a path through trees and stand where the mighty and all-ambitious French Emperor had first regarded Moscow's glittering cupolas and domes. On my route home lay the Donskòi Monastery, another sacred edifice indelibly connected with Russian history. Here in 1591 the army of Borís Godunòv defeated a host of Mongols, whereupon the reigning monarch showed his gratitude by erecting a monastery and calling it after the Don, the district whence came the Cossacks whose prowess had contributed to winning the victory. As no obstacle impeded my entrance through the gates of this strong place, I was soon walking amid the trees of its beautiful cemetery. A dignitary with a full dark beard and wearing gorgeous striped vestments passed, preceded formally by a clerk; then a priest in a yellow cope and tall black velvet head covering entered the principal church, within which I found five minor services simultaneously carried on by different clergy in separate parts of a moderately sized floor. The devotions were perhaps intercessory or commemorative, for they took the form of reading from an open book, no doubt in the old Slavonic, before congregations of two or three persons.

Through Russia in War-time

Through the branches of the trees a lovely sight was afforded by this church, surmounted by blue and starred cupolas, and by another church with a red and storied spire.

A mile or two eastward lies the imposing Sìmonov Monastery, whose lofty walls are half a mile in length. Thither I walked along the plain that surrounds Moscow, but found the way barred by the river, in the middle of which lay some great barges loaded with hay, apparently cut to satisfy local requirements. Some village boys, astonished at the apparition of such an almost inarticulate wayfarer as myself, told me where to find a bridge. What a formidable appearance is presented by the monastery, with its enormous wall, and its several ancient fortress towers attaining an elevation of 120 feet! Peaceful, indeed, beside them looks the modern belfry, three times as lofty. Upon the ikonostàs is a special treasure, the ikòn which was used by Saint Sergius to confer a blessing upon Dmitri Donskoi, before, at the end of the fourteenth century, he advanced to defeat the Tatars at Kulikòvo on the upper Don. Within the walls of the monastery, which much later fell before a terrible assault of Poles and Lithuanians, are several churches. Though very rich, it of course no longer owns any of the many thousand serfs who with villages formed its chief possessions. Compared with the number of monks seen in Italy, the celibate or 'black' clergy seem few; as to the parish priests (who must marry), they form the 'white' clergy, and are attired in long grey or brown

Moscow

robes. But the village pope, who usually marries his deceased predecessor's daughter, exists under the severe disciplinary control of a Bishop belonging to the 'black' order and, though receiving fees from his parishioners for rites and ceremonies such as christenings, confession, and marriage, is strictly a servant of the State. Later, at intervals, I met popes travelling on river steamers, where sometimes they would occupy a bench on deck at night, while at others, appearing more affluent, they entered the saloon. On a certain occasion a priest seemed about to address me, but unfortunately his wife said, "He does not speak Russian!" Nevertheless, I well recall how once, upon the banks of the Jordan, I met a pope who, like many other pilgrims to Jerusalem, extended the journey to Jericho, and devoutly bathed in the sacred river. Affable, shrewd, and delightful, he was able to converse in English, having spent two years in America.

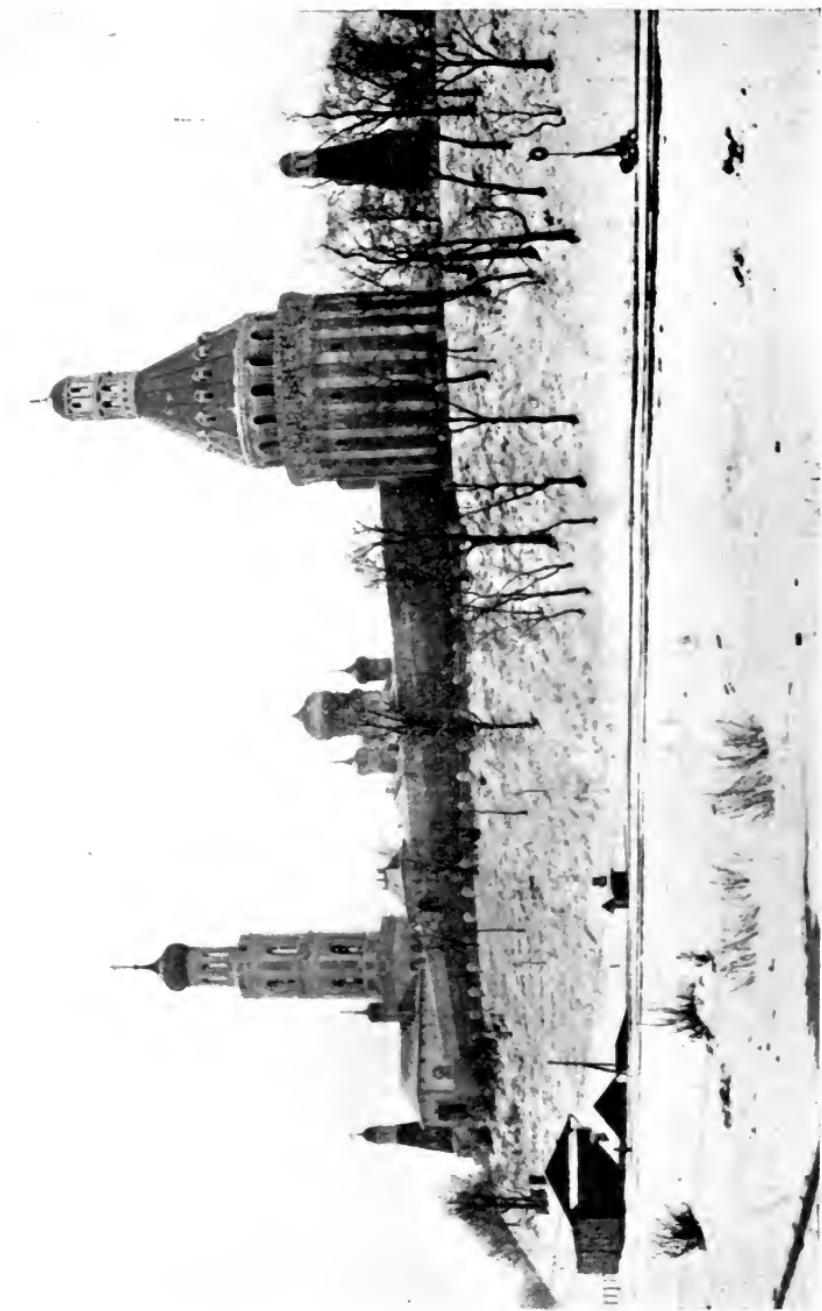
Above the Moskvà, and situated in the heart of the city, stands commandingly an enormous white edifice of regular, if plain, design, the Imperial Foundling Hospital. Established by Catherine II, it is to some extent supported by a tax upon playing cards. Hither are brought infants, in a few cases after abandonment by distressed mothers who have bowed their heads to shame or poverty, but oftener by such natural protectors more or less openly surrendering their offspring to superior care. Round the neck of each child is fastened a number, which appears on a paper given to the bearer, for the purpose of future visiting, possibly reclamation.

Through Russia in War-time

Several peasant women are in attendance ready to act, first as foster mothers for a few weeks in the institution, and next, if all goes well, to return home and bring the children up among village surroundings for a small monthly payment under the care of the district physician. I was fortunate enough to be shown over the institution by its very courteous Director, and found it not unlike English hospitals built a century or two ago, though the rooms open more frequently on inner passages and are less exposed to light. The temperature was high, but the rigorous nature of the Russian winter and general ideas concerning admissibility of breezes have weight in such a matter. At the head of each bed stood, in a red skirt and white tunic, a simple and healthy peasant girl, seemingly well fitted to carry out her vicarious duties. Almost a thousand such nurses are employed in the course of the year, but many times that number of children obtain admission, and the after-mortality is large, partly on account of the rude conditions of life in the peasant's 'izbà.' I was much interested in an incubator consisting of a central apparatus of copper piping filled with warm water, and radiating heat to eight cots around, where, ensconced in cotton-wool, lay especially delicate little ones. The hospital, which seemed to me carefully and ably managed, humanely meets a pressing want, for among the large-hearted masses certain lapses are not always regarded very censoriously.

Before leaving Moscow for the south, I used modern means of communication to renew acquaint-





THE SIMONOV MONASTERY. MOSCOW.

Moscow

ance with one or two outlying attractions. A little steamer bore me again to the Simonov Monastery, which, however, provided a less beautiful vision from without in summer than in winter. As I sat on deck a male passenger stared at me suspiciously, and more frequently than, as I trust, my gaze was directed toward an elderly lady smoking cigarettes. Journeying next on a Sunday evening in an electric tram to the Sparrow Hills, I enjoyed once more the superb view of the city, whose various churches, and walls, and towers were lighted by a western sun already low, and entered some pleasure-gardens, where visitors, sitting under trees at scores of small tables, brewed tea from the samovar. Suddenly and spontaneously, step dancing began, in which one after another of the young men and women, even bravely some no longer youthful, took part. Representatives of sexes assumed positions opposite one another. Then the male performer, making a succession of short and scarcely graceful steps, circled swiftly round, stooping down from time to time to slap his ankles. His *vis-à-vis* replied in a similar manner, but comported herself more gently. Hearty cheering and loud cries of "bis" followed each dance. A concertina sounded first here, next there, or half a dozen persons sang a strangely high-pitched ditty, which, appearing to me lugubrious, could yet give general satisfaction.

Moscow has changed considerably since a generation ago. Something of its quaint, secluded, sleepy semi-Oriental character has passed. Not that then the city was benighted! Did not melodious

Through Russia in War-time

Italian opera delight and a sprightly performance of "Robinson Crusoe" captivate me? But irregular streets of small houses with yellow or blue or pink walls and red or green roofs are now less frequent. Tramways have added their discord to a busier life. The curious little stalls under the walls in the Kitàigorod have nearly disappeared. A hotel where the waiters wore a white costume and red sash about the waist is replaced by one where they appear in the black and white garb characteristic of their calling. Possibly now the winter sport of speeding down the steep surface of a high wooden framework, coated with slabs of ice, cannot be enjoyed near the heart of the ancient capital. But what undeserved reproaches! The city of the famous Kremlin grows more fascinating as the visitor becomes better able to appreciate the significance of its history and architecture. Here, independently of Western influence, a civilization developed which, although it was not destined to make rapid strides until after an adventurous Tsar returned from abroad with new ideas, could much earlier evince its capacity to overthrow Tatar domination, and so save the rest of Europe from a lurking danger. As to Moscow's part in breaking the power of an ambitious would-be world-conqueror, who hesitated not to drench the earth with blood in furtherance of his domineering designs, it is well known. With an astounding past, what may not well be the future?

CHAPTER VII

THROUGH KURSK TO KIEV

INTENDING to visit Kiev, I chose the route through Kursk, and noticed, at the Moscow railway-station, that the obliging lady clerk used the abacus, or frame supporting parallel wires with wooden beads upon them, when she calculated the cost of my ticket. The carriage, though lighted by a candle, was good, and everything conduced to satisfactory repose. Looking out soon after three o'clock next morning, I saw moujiks already at work, and large fields full of ripe sunflowers gently inclining their gorgeous and heavy heads toward the east. The soil had grown very dark, and its surface almost level, and large areas bore witness to oat-producing qualities, but trees were few. Here, instead of log huts, 'izbàs' with white walls and thatched roofs seemed the sole habitations. A fair-haired arrival affably exchanged a few words with me as to the nature of the crops and our respective destinations. Then, having discovered upon the cushion a noxious thing, which he humorously called a 'Roosk,' and slain it, he arranged his blankets and sheets, took off dickey, top-boots, and white socks, revealing

Through Russia in War-time

thereby immaculate cleanliness, and ere long fell asleep. No hedges or other fences were visible, but, here and there, a row of spruce firs bordered the railway. At long intervals a solitary pink-shirted peasant came into view, walking along a cart track, and carrying, perhaps, a scythe or a saw; also two files of women in bright-coloured attire attracted my notice as they went to work at five o'clock. But except such human beings and a few horses or cows, nothing during many miles broke the monotony of waving and ripening oats in alternation with the rank grass of fallow ground. Then some woods appeared, and little white churches, here and there dotting the horizon, spoke of distant 'celòs,' or villages, while nearer could be seen a few miserable sheep, and two or three picturesque 'izbàs' with adjoining barns, whose untidy thatching almost reached the ground.

The station at Kursk resembles many another, inasmuch as not only do its hard floor tiles offer a convenient and apparently satisfactory couch for numerous peasants, but it is separated by a considerable distance from the town. One-storied square log houses, painted white or blue, and lighted by small windows, lined a cobble-stone road for nearly a mile. Then came a river, some clumps of willows and poplars (in lieu of the everlasting birches and firs of the north), a hill, a Red Cross hospital, a triumphal arch bearing the date 1870, and covered with red distemper, and electric trams with women conductors. Kursk is brightened by broad leafy streets, by the gilded, or white, or green

Through Kursk to Kiev

domes of the churches, and by variously coloured shops, adorned with large gilt lettering.

Finding myself in the outskirts of the town, I entered a 'tchaynaya' (tea-room), containing little square tables covered with moderately clean table-cloths. Resting here, I saw, on looking out of the window, a sorrowful procession, with its white car accompanied by eight or ten mutes in costumes of the same colour. Two priests, in long brown cloaks and grey straw hats, preceded the mourners on foot. But next came a different reminder of Russia. A detachment of reservists, whose uniforms at some epoch had been new, marched past and marked the time by a folk-song chanted loudly to no accompaniment but the heavy tread of top-booted feet. The last man carried a puppy as a mascot. More vigorous and impressive were some mounted men riding without saddles, who passed me on my way to the station, where a violent thunderstorm, of the sort which alone supplies moisture to the south in summer, made entry into crowded carriages unpleasant. From now onwards the social atmosphere was charged with the element of war; and, if here or there officers displayed a somewhat authoritative bearing, what sensible person could demand undeviating mildness in those ready to risk their lives and deal out death to the foe? But my interest was aroused by two other passengers, probably newly married—a delicate-looking sub-altern, proceeding, as I should imagine, to the front, and his fair young wife. As the hours passed, affection, intensified doubtless by tragic possibilities,

Through Russia in War-time

asserted itself, so he held her hand silently, or, placing his own around her, read aloud from a book in a low and refined voice. The conveyance was 'passazhierski,' that is, somewhat slow, for the 'courrierski,' or fast trains, are infrequent, but the long night passed without incident other than the entry of an enormous Russian, who, throwing himself on his back, soon snored heavily, while below in our four-berth compartment, the young wife slept peacefully, and none but myself cared whether the engine's sullen inactivity cut us off entirely from the entry of fresh air through merciful interstices. In the morning, a priest with magnificent auburn locks and beard having given us his company, I rejoiced to hear him instructing his little daughter in grammar. Here, then, was a human being, young, it is true, but clearly unable without assistance to link correctly adjective and noun in the accusative case! The discovery encouraged me. At this moment the famous and rich black earth was no more visible, its place being taken by a grey or brown soil, under tillage, crops showing of, to some extent, lucerne and potatoes, but chiefly grain over enormous expanses. Now, for the first time, oaks (and they possessed very straight trunks) came into view, while willow and poplar maintained their advantage. Lastly, we passed through pasture supporting hundreds of horses and foals.

The view of Kiev from the east on a summer morning is unforgettable. For as the traveller approaches and then crosses the Dneiper, being in no way disappointed, nay, delighted beyond measure,

Through Kursk to Kiev

he is faced by lofty belfries and gilded domes and cupolas, which, as it were to welcome him, stand forth from well-wooded heights. Ancient and renowned monasteries and churches await the coming of him who in lively expectation has crossed great steppes to visit them. The city in its central portion is not only handsome and modern but very lively. The sunshine and gentle hills and fine stone buildings and broad streets reminded me of more than one Australian capital. But in addition Kiev offers a superlative sight from its high cliff, at whose foot runs the broad river, beyond which, illimitably eastward, extends the steppe. There, at the period of my visit, a considerable area on the left bank was covered with military tents, since the city, as the capital of the Ukraine, has great strategic importance. Not only the pavements and the restaurants, but my hotel in the Kreshtchàtik, gave, by the presence of numerous officers, some evidence of war, but my movements were in no way hampered, though after my papers had been collected a sharp-looking man knocked at my door by mistake.

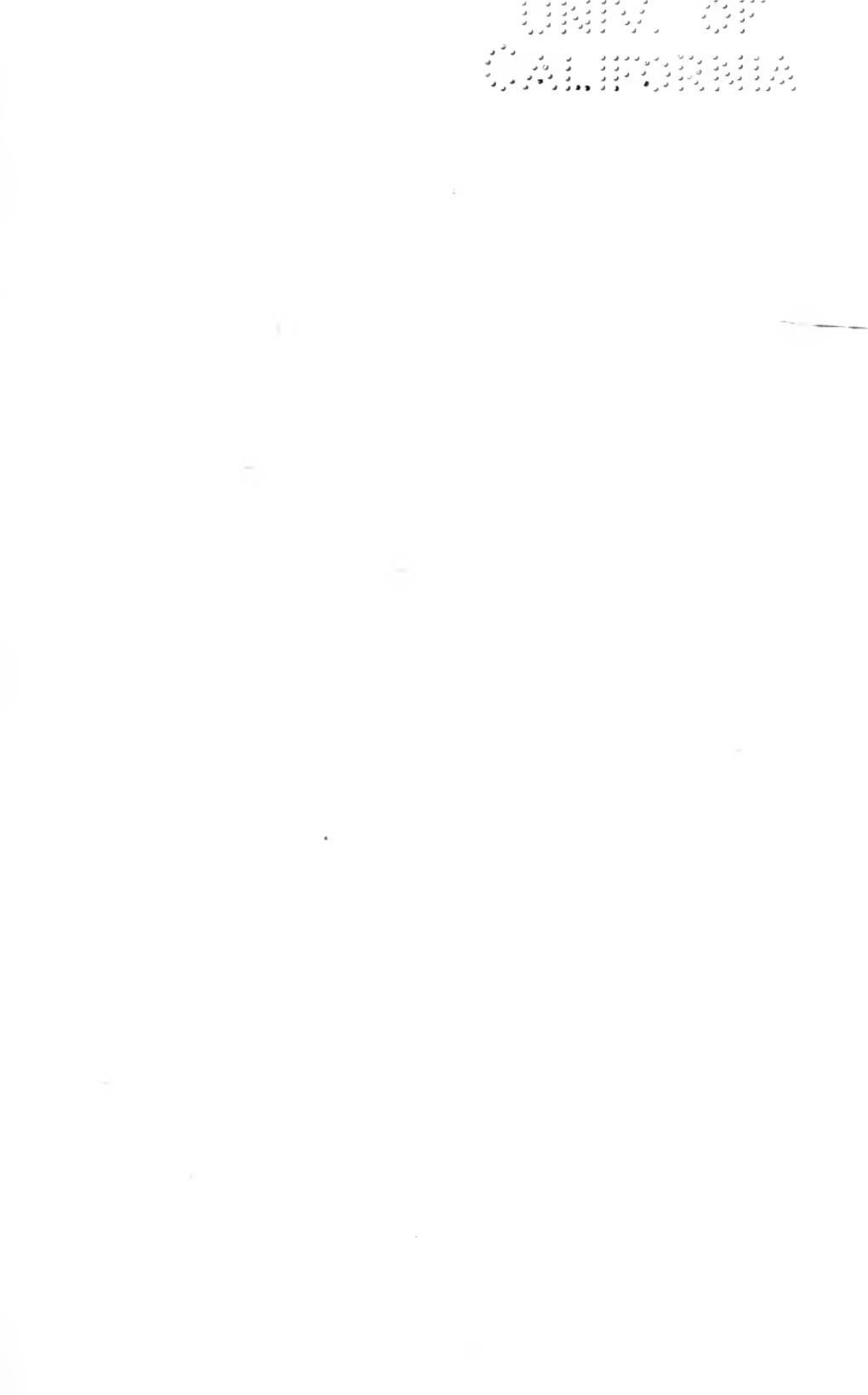
What remarkable associations has this place ! How extraordinary are its annals ! Here Vladìmir, saint of the Russian Church, who had previously set up near by a statue of Pèrun, the god of thunder, caused, toward the end of the tenth century, his people to be baptized. For eighty years the Mongols ruled that which was to be, during so long as two and a half centuries, a Lithuanian principality. Next Kiev fell under the dominion

Through Russia in War-time

of Polish kings, at which period the Cossacks became a fighting power. Finally, just before the reign of Peter the Great, the city passed once more to Muscovy.

But what of the Cathedral, St. Sophia? Founded fifty years after the first Russians embraced Christian tenets on the banks of the Dneiper, it worthily celebrates a victory of Prince Yaroslav over a Turkish race, the Petchegs. The edifice, with a ground plan shaped like a Greek cross, is adorned by as many as fifteen gilded domes of graceful form, of which the chief, surrounded by a roof of barrel-shaped vaulting, is visible from the floor. The several aisles and the transepts are among the most ancient portions of the building. On a convex surface, over and behind the altar, a very fine Byzantine mosaic of the Virgin Mary recalls the Russian Church's debt to the Eastern Empire. Entering the comparatively small central space where the worshippers stand or kneel, I could not but admire the gorgeous beauty of the gilded and silver high relief work of the ikonostàs. A handsome young priest, possessing long dark hair and beard, swung, as he stood with his back to the congregation, a censer between the people and the holy door, while he chanted and sang gloriously, and three choristers grouped together and in lay garb responded.

Another, and perhaps even greater, attraction of this city is the Petchèrskaya Làvra, a wealthy, immense, and remarkable monastery, dating from the middle of the eleventh century. The pious





A RUSSIAN POPE. KIEV.

To face p. 107.

Through Kursk to Kìev

chronicler Nestor tells how Hilarion, a priest, used to retire for prayer and solitude to the wooded banks of the Dneiper, and in such situation built himself a dark cave, or petchèra. Hither came a second holy man, Anthony, and in the deserted cave of Hilarion passed many years of spiritual life, though when disciples collected around him he retreated to another cell dug out of the ground. Then Theodosius, after the number of the community had risen to a hundred brethren, wrote out for them the rule of the strictest monastery in Constantinople, and enriched it with his own spiritual instructions, as on prayer and charity and resistance of temptation. Bending my steps to the Làvra, which term implies a monastery of the highest class, I found that the walls are about twenty feet high, and that the entrance is adorned with coloured frescoes of the founders and early hermits. The monks wear black gowns, and high, almost cylindrical, velvet hats, wider either above or below. Proceeding past a stall where ikòns and mementoës, such as a painting of St. Olga, could be purchased, and along a fine avenue between the homes of the monks, I came upon a strange scene. It was a hot day, and some fifty of the pilgrims (who visit the shrines annually to the number, it is said, of 150,000), men and women in humble costumes, lay upon the ground under the shelter of leafy trees, or reclined at full length on stone benches. The Russian peasant requires no feather-bed, nor carries anything larger than a small bundle as baggage. The Cathedral of the Ascension of the

Through Russia in War-time

Virgin has numerous gilded cupolas, and its interior is much like that of St. Sophia, though less handsome. It has also a very lofty detached belfry. In a large undecorated side room a spectacled and learned-looking monk, wearing unpretentious vestments, held a service before a table whereon stood a crucifix, while three others of his Order, dark and distinguished by a forest of beautiful hair, formed in the rear a choir. Beside the refectory is the simple grave of Stolypin, the assassinated Minister of State, a native of Kiev.

But more interesting than anything else stays in my memory a visit to the Hermits' Caves. Almost incredible, and yet apparently true, is it that holy men, passing part of their lives in darkness, occupied tiny cells on either side of long passages hewn through the hillside. As one of a group of visitors waiting in a vestibule at the end of the catacombs, I had full time to observe upon a wall scenes representing a soul's progress through purgatory. A child is depicted attended by two angels, the three being in white, and they are threatened by black devils, hideously adorned with long tails and wolves' heads. Having formed a procession, headed by a monk, and purchased, each of us, a taper at the price of a few kopecks, we passed along during several minutes through what would have been complete darkness but for the lights carried in our hands. The company included several soldiers, a pope, and some peasants. Descending perhaps twenty steps, we followed, still downwards, an incline about two

Through Kursk to Kiev

feet wide and less than seven high. On either side were numerous little cells, excavated in the sandstone, and having no outlet but on to the narrow gallery in which we walked. There is a legend to the effect that one of the anchorites lived for a space of thirty years with most of his body buried, and I was interested to find, as if it were fixed in the ground, before one of the cells a torso and head surmounted by a bishop's mitre. I touched the effigy or relic with my hand, but became aware of a warning pressure from the visitor behind me. In front of each cell lay an open but small coffin, whose contents were concealed by a red cloth ; and frequently a framed engraving of the saint hung upon the wall. All these sacred objects were repeatedly and reverently kissed by the native members of the procession. So, wending my way with the throng, I eventually arrived at a spot shrouded in somewhat less obscurity, because illuminated by three or four stationary tapers. Here stood a monk with, beside him, a copper receptacle, in shape and size like a kettle-drum, and filled with holy water. He dipped a hollow metal cross into the fluid and lifted it to my lips, and then so deftly and persistently tilted the vessel that I perforce swallowed almost every drop. So did romantic surroundings overcome my discretion !

It was my privilege to attend an evening concert in some beautiful pleasure-gardens overlooking the Dneiper. The orchestra of about sixty performers, almost entirely violins, appeared to me highly

Through Russia in War-time

efficient, and I could not but feel impressed by the extreme respect and rapt attention paid by the audience alike to the musicians and a cantatrice possessing a voice of unusually high soprano quality. During a long interval another band at a short distance discoursed light operatic airs for the benefit of promenaders.

I was here among the 'Little-' or 'Malo-Russians,' sometimes called Ruthenians, of slighter figure and darker skin than the 'Great Russians' to the north. They are an intelligent people and lively, but, it is said, less energetic than the folk of Moscow, and there is a difference in the languages, which probably explained some of my difficulties. As to race, the hundreds of men and boys bathing on the sandy banks of the river revealed bodies in many cases as dark as those of Italians. But Kiev presented other interesting sights, such as vehicles sometimes driven with four horses abreast, and bare-footed women and girls carrying wooden yokes across the shoulders. Nurses in black or grey, under a white covering for head and shoulders, and with a red cross upon the chest, were often to be seen in the streets, and if no formal military display obtruded itself upon my notice, I breathed an atmosphere more actively warlike than that of Moscow or Petrograd, as was to be expected, since I had approached much nearer the seat of hostilities.

CHAPTER VIII

ODESSA AND A VOYAGE UP THE DNEIPER

AT Kiev station a vast queue of would-be travellers, among whom were many officers, made my departure doubtful, but after much waiting at the kassa I obtained by good luck the last ticket to be issued. Fortunate in my coupé-companion, a polite and cultured railway official, I learned that his duty of journeying great distances to carry out routine financial arrangements, even in districts soon afterwards relinquished to the enemy, had made him pass twenty-one consecutive nights on the train. In the morning the country reminded me of the English South Downs, but the rolling surface revealed a black soil under pasture or oats. There were no trees except a hedge of acacias beside the track, where appeared also patches of potatoes. Next, while the undulating surface became covered with Indian corn, the population remained extraordinarily sparse ; neither town nor village could be seen.

Mile after mile of oats and barley, as interminable waving golden grain or standing sheaves ! Sometimes the cutting was done with scythes, sometimes with a machine, but I saw no combined reaper and binder. The crops were never so thick as

Through Russia in War-time

with us and, before our destination was reached, upon a level plain they became thin indeed.

Odessa is admirably laid out, and its houses and gardens seem well adapted to the requirements of a warm climate. Issuing from my hotel door with the intention of walking a few steps to the famous and leafy boulevard, which overlooks the harbour and Black Sea, I fell into an absurd error. In great heat, and an exhausting atmosphere which persisted till a thunderstorm, I walked far but to learn, after much bewilderment, that having turned to the right instead of the left, through mistaking the side of the street, I had arrived once more at the railway-station. However, in a day or two, topographical troubles had vanished, and making my way easily among the splendid central streets, which cross one another at right angles, I could notice their busy life, and observe that of the open squares and unusually fine cafés.

An excursion to one of the limàns, or silted-up mouths of the Dneister, proved of much interest. These are picturesque lagoons, where afflicted men or women can indulge in mud bathing. Choosing a limàn at the foot of the cliffs, forming the southern boundary of the steppe, and riding out of the city for a few miles on a tramcar, I suddenly perceived several men who, except as to their faces, might have been Kaffirs. I saw no bathing machines or tents in these parts, and the women who disrobe upon the shore are unhampered by certain conventional ideas which obtain in the West. Wherefore, many glimpses of beautiful forms obtrude

Odessa and a Voyage up the Dneiper

themselves on the roving gaze of the passer-by. But, showing excellent taste, the ladies of Odessa enter only the clearest water, and avoiding all mud holes, generously relinquish such to the men-folk. The treatment is reputedly efficacious for rheumatism. Pursuing my way for a while beyond the shores of the lake, I arrived at a wayside Gostinnitza, whose host provided for my delectation, under 'some trees, kvas and a 'plonka'—that is, a chicken far younger than is eaten in England. Then, mounting the cliff, I could gaze on the historic Euxine and the romantic steppe.

As Odessa was an important centre well within the war zone, it continued necessary to guard against persons who might try to lure me into dangerous conversation. While I was sitting in some gardens, a man suddenly asked me, in Russian, if I knew that a certain Dreadnought had departed for the Bosphorus. Such a question seemed extraordinary. But his next interrogation was no more to my taste. "How is Wilhelm?" Using the most expressive words that occurred to me, I replied 'On tchort,' and, thus characterizing a bearer of the name as a prince of darkness, I hastily regained a state of untrammelled independence. However, I had no such ill-fortune as befell a gentleman of prominent position who, while speaking his native English, was arrested in a tramcar for employing the language of the enemy!

This modern mercantile city of great importance, since it is the outlet of a huge trade in grain, possesses a very interesting museum of history and

Through Russia in War-time

antiques, wherein I found, not only copper and bronze caldrons of the Scythian period but vases with classical ornamentation. That evidences of Greek colonization, on these shores of the Black Sea, have ill endured, is perhaps due to the rock's inferior weathering character, hints of which are clearly given in the gardens below the Nicholas Boulevard, where tall, isolated masses of soft shell-limestone can be closely inspected. The people of the city had congregated on the promenade to observe some newly arrived cruisers and destroyers, when another military spectacle occurred, a progress through the main streets of a large body of troops. These men, thousands in number, who came from a camp at a few miles' distance, were in heavy marching order, and each carried pannikin and axe. They wore a toil-stained brownish cotton uniform and, advancing seven abreast as usual, with bayonets fixed, appeared drawn from strong, hardy sons of the soil. The front ranks of each company always kept good step, while the men in the rear, possibly including new levies, showed to less advantage. The senior officers at once won my heart because of their determined, intelligent faces and fine bearing, but all seemed soldierly and capable. The people thronged the pavements and waved handkerchiefs. Each regiment had its full array of field kitchens, sometimes drawn by mares whose foals trotted alongside ; but neither band nor other form of display graced the march ; rather was here a military exercise set off by a touch of Nature ; for until at last prevented by a mounted leader, tradesmen, leav-

Odessa and a Voyage up the Dneiper

ing their shops, lavished gifts of cigarettes upon the men and caused a little confusion. So this great nation, showing an earnest and brave front in the fearful struggle for right and freedom against might and tyranny, continued to play a resolute and noble part, though reeling from defeat in the early summer of 1915.

A genial English gentleman, with whom I became acquainted, kindly took me to two places, each in its special way exemplifying Russian civilization. One was a small wonder-working ikòn in a side chapel of the large but not very beautiful Cathedral, and the other an exhibition of peasant industries. As allusion has already been made to the latter subject, it will suffice to say that a society of the *noblesse*, assisting this valuable form of the moujik's enterprise, displayed in a gallery specimens of his work in metal, pottery, cutlery, carved wood, etc. Skill and artistic merit, also the national religious sentiment, characterized the work, for here were the little oxidized crosses one of which, hung round the infant's neck at baptism, is never removed.

Nor did this cosmopolitan city, so remarkable for its gaiety and open-air life, fail to remind me of the essential pathos of the Russian life. From my hotel room I could hear the kitchen-maids singing plaintive songs as, under the control of a chef, they prepared great heaps of beans and peas and such things. But one day into the court there came a poor woman and a little boy. By the trees the child danced and turned elementary somersaults upon a mat, while the mother sang, to the accompani-

Through Russia in War-time

ment of her concertina, such a wailing, sorrowful song as revealed an inheritance of race-suffering spread over generations or centuries.

Well-informed writers have described characteristics of the moujik's mind—for instance, an easy, good nature which tends to condone a theft, if restitution is made before the matter is considered by the communal judges. One or two instances of childish simplicity, combined with unblushing assurance in deeds of petty unrighteousness, came to my notice, and, at Odessa, an amusing development occurred on the occasion of my early departure. The floor waiter, long after my debt to the hotel had been discharged, and a 'kvitantsiya' handed me for payment of all possible items including use of mattress, pillow, blanket, and sheets, at the last moment demanded 'poltorà' (a rouble and a half) for 'kravàht,' or bedstead. The time was short, so I fell a victim ; but a certain satisfaction mitigated my annoyance, since the man's trick proved my perspicacity in condemning him from the first as the owner of a somewhat villainous countenance. Except for this and a few other trivial unfavourable experiences, I detected no more, perhaps less, dishonesty during several months' travel than would have cropped up in an equal time in better-known countries.

Ambition prompted me to approach the Crimea, but on account of unspecified, easily imagined reasons, the direct peace-time service of steamers to Sebastòpol had ceased. Nevertheless, hearing that a trading vessel would depart for Chersòn, at the

Odessa and a Voyage up the Dneiper

mouth of the Dneiper, and that it would be feasible, by transshipping and journeying up such river for twenty-four hours, to reach main railway communication for the southern beauty spot, I determined to embark. Our paddle-boat left port in the exact wake of a leader, and soon seven or eight other craft, steam and sailing, were carefully following in our immediate track. After several hours we either zigzagged or went slow, or stopped awhile altogether, and then I remarked that the sea had assumed a yellowish-green colour, so dark as to be nearly black. On deck two clarionets, a fiddle, and a trombone, giving forth evil sounds, provoked the derision of some white-uniformed naval officers, one of whom later played a few bars of a Dead March upon the saloon piano. Fortunately we did not even catch a glimpse of any dreaded submarine.¹ Drawing nearer to land, the vessel disgorged passengers, who were taken ashore in little boats having queer triangular sails. Here the red sandstone cliffs attained a height of over a hundred feet, and above them the steppe was thickly covered with wheat-sheaves. Transshipping now from the steamer, which continued up the River Bug, I journeyed in another between the low green banks, lining the estuary of the Dneiper, to Chersón. An affable young student on board told me he had lately seen the yellow flag here—that is, on the very scene of the great John Howard's labours in elucidating the nature and cause of a fearful zymotic disease.

¹ But on a similar journey, several months later, the *Mercury* struck a mine and sank with a loss of some hundreds of lives.

Through Russia in War-time

Spending the night in this pleasant town, I found ere long, in the main avenue, the little white house, now occupied by a bookseller, where dwelt and died that noble investigator of the plague "John Gavàrd," as he is called locally. He is held in reverence, not only a street being named after him but, near some outlying boulevards, a handsome obelisk doing honour to his memory. In a central square rises, with at his feet a casque, a bronze armoured statue of Potemkin, the Minister and favourite, who built temporary townships to impress on Catherine II falsely favourable notions concerning the prosperity of the southern country, which she had desired to inspect. How precocious is the Russian boy ! One, at this place, pursued me a great distance from his kiosk, that he might sell me, at forty kopecks, a postcard dear at the ten he finally accepted.

The journey up the Dneiper from Chersòn to Alexandròvsk consumed more than a day and a night amid scenery which, though flat, lacked not a quiet beauty. At first, above cliffs some thirty or forty feet high, wheat-sheaves covered the dry steppe, or, on the left bank, a delta-like greenness extended to the water's edge ; but later, on either side, great sallows clustered in groups, or black poplars soared with fine effect against the blue sky. Often such forest trees produced an exquisite reflection on the glassy river, while cattle and horses sheltering from the sun's rays—for the heat was severe—brought animal life to the scene. Occasionally we passed a timber barge or a wherry-like boat with a man rowing and a woman steering.

Odessa and a Voyage up the Dneiper

Vines were visible on the steppe, and the crops included rye and barley, as I learned from two men who pronounced themselves, not Russian, but ‘Evræ,’ or Jews. They had rather fleshy features, and by no means the countenances generally accepted as characteristic of the race. Except for the inferior sleeping accommodation in a cabin of unpleasant surprises, the steamer was comfortable and, upon a promenade deck, I strove to speak Russian with several persons. It took some time to convince a sharp youth in a white embroidered “shirt” that I was not a Nyèmetz, or German, who had stolen across the frontier, but ability to reply readily under cross-examination to questions concerning physical conditions at Archangel (my port of entry) carried the day. However, a man with a large parcel gloomily condemned me, and I must acknowledge he had grounds for his adverse judgment. Had he not discovered that my Anglo-Russian vademecum was originally published by the enemy? More than once, when speaking to his friends, he confidently pronounced me ‘Deutsch,’ for which reason I rejoiced when he departed. Such passengers did not enter the saloon, but another and important category remained altogether on the main deck, there to brew their ‘tchai’ and munch great pieces of bread, sit silently side by side, or, even in daytime, lie huddled together on the bare planks. These were moujiks, often in their waking moments gazing into nothingness, or if women, stolidly attentive to numerous large and placid infants.

Through Russia in War-time

To the first-class passengers was served a good dinner with courses ranging from radishes and sausage to coffee, through borsch, beans, spring chicken, and ices. But the time would have hung heavily for such fellow-travellers if they had not played 'dvàdsat-ee-odnò' (vingt-et-un) without cessation. With rounds occurring in the game rapidly, and a stake amounting usually to one, two, or three roubles, it was interesting to watch the players, among whom apparently the most successful was a handsome man of superior air and easy manners, accompanied by a young lady nearly as devoted to the amusement as himself.

So the voyage continued along low shores covered by eternal handsome black poplars and sallows, between which would peep rarely a mud cabin. If we came to any town, as for instance Nicopol, near which, two or three generations ago, was found a precious vase in "the great tomb of the Scythians" (one of the district's numerous tumuli), boys, girls, and men bathing greeted us with many shouts. At last we passed some large and wooded islands which, at one time, sheltered a Zaporog, or "below the rapids," Cossack community, under such strict discipline that the presence in it of women was not allowed.

CHAPTER IX

THE CRIMEA

AT Alexandròvsk the few phaetons near the solitary landing stage quickly fell to the share of natives, wherefore, facing the inevitable, I lifted my baggage and followed the stream of scanty traffic toward the town. However, overtaken by a telèga of a primitive sort, for it had no sides, I made an offer to the driver and jumped up, and the man, when we met an empty carriage, transferred me, so that I reached the station several minutes before the departure of the train. When we had started the gift of a pleasant breeze on this hot summer day seemed promised me. Alas ! suffering from a cold, a young man in a white cap and coat peremptorily ordered an attendant to close the window. But, as even in Russia people will sometimes contend for fresh air, a certain restlessness affected the other travellers, who, when leaving the compartment, always forgot to shut the sliding doors, wherefore the young official performed the task swiftly and decisively for himself an incredible number of times. Nevertheless, two passengers seated themselves by the exit and kept it open, whereupon the vanquished autocrat remained

Through Russia in War-time

gloomily silent and motionless in his corner. As usual the night journey passed pleasantly, and I awoke in delightful scenes; for the approach to Sebastòpol by train is especially fine, the bold green heights of Inkerman assuming various beautiful outlines, before the harbour reveals itself below the railway line and countless deadly engines and implements of war come into view. When a gendarme, who boarded the train, had passed my papers provisionally, a superior two-horsed vehicle took me to the Hotel Kist. Thence a few steps led, in glowing sunshine, to some pleasant gardens. What a sight now presented itself in the water-way! Here stood, on tireless guard, a huge structure reminding me of Spithead, while, flying low in the blue sky, an aeroplane advanced confidently. But I had much to do in a short time, and must visit the historic Malàkoff, on the road whither a lame lady of middle age, overhearing me inquire the way, astonished me by asking if I was one of the enemy. From a suburban tramcar I alighted near the Malàkoff 'kurgan,' and, having passed under an impressive classical gateway of yellow limestone, climbed an ascent. Suddenly a soldier above called, "Skòlko vrèmenee?" thereby giving me an opportunity to reply steadily that it was ten minutes past eleven. Here be it noted that the Russians, doubtless animated by a wish to perplex foreigners with linguistic niceties, consider, in recording the hour, eleven plural and certain lesser numbers singular, but I like to think my answer was sufficiently correct to satisfy the watchful

The Crimea

sentry. A white-bearded Crimean veteran of courteous manner and pleasing intonation explained the former position of the famous Redan, and where were placed the headquarters of English, and French, and Turks. With his stick he indicated the direction of the Alma and then Inkerman and, farther to the right, Balaclava. So for a while we stood gazing over bare, yellowish-green hills. Then this genial and dignified guide led me into a circular loopholed passage within the six - foot stone-walled bastion, and explained where had been the central powder magazine, and the entrance to a mine dug by the Russians. In one corner of the gallery still stands the little shrine with five ikòns, not far from which the commander always had his bed. Having, lastly, inspected the monument to the heroic sailor Koshka, I turned away from the Malàkoff, humiliated by the thought that man's progress on earth has been so often marked by futile effort and tragic horrors.

An afternoon train took me swiftly to Inkerman, famous for British valour and pertinacity. The secluded station lies among marshy meadows, near olive-trees and the Tchòrnaya river, between pleasant hills and huge white cliffs, exhibiting on their sides pagan cave dwellings or sepultures. A magnificent gendarme, of whom I inquired the whereabouts of the battlefield, asked for my papers, and after inspecting a visiting card, the sole voucher I then carried, saluted. But I did not explore far, being content, in a military atmosphere, to stroll along the valley and watch liberty men

Through Russia in War-time

from the fleet, as, in white costumes with orange and black ribbons, they wandered aimlessly or sang somewhat doleful catches, or refused not on occasion, under some trees, to romp with a hoyden. But in the evening at a 'goolyànie,' or open-air promenade, in some pretty gardens overlooking the harbour mouth, a naval band played lively music. Everybody was attired in white, and at little tables and tents ladies sold small articles for the benefit of the wounded. Each officer wore a dirk.

At eight o'clock next morning I set forth for a fifty-mile motor drive to famous Yàlta. Before we left the town an agent, of whom on the previous day I had bought my seat for the sum of eight roubles, mysteriously requested me to alight. Privately and almost reproachfully he observed that the accommodation was worth two additional roubles, but the diverting effrontery of his proceeding won it no success. At first the road led over parched heights, where one or two sentries, unsheltered from the rays of the broiling sun, had sunk down on the ground or lay at full length. Then the scene grew more mountainous, and after five or six miles there came into view, in front and to the right, the long, smooth valley immortally associated with the dashing exploit of the Light Brigade. In the same direction, nearer the sea, lay the village of Balaclava. Upon the left were two monuments, respectively to Russian and British fallen. Next we passed some olive-trees, and then through thick, but not lofty, forests of oak and beech. Meantime, at our first breakdown, I had

The Crimea

an opportunity to become acquainted with my fellow-travellers, who included a tchinòvnik and a pretty and bright lady and her husband. Exhilarated by rapid movement through romantic scenery, we made the seconds fly faster by indulging in frivolous remarks of a kind to which French lends itself. For a most lively gaiety of a discreet kind can at times affect the sedate, if they are moved by the joy of life. After all, the world is afflicted by too much solemnity. Had I dared look in the lady's eyes they might have appeared of a superb hue—for instance, an exquisite violet; or allowing my dull gaze to rest on her hair, protected from dust by a veil, I might have pronounced it golden, than which nothing is more lovely. But her lord appreciated his treasure, for, taking me aside, he asked earnestly if his wife was not beautiful, and thus revealed a pleasant expansiveness of soul distinctive of his countrymen, who, if prone at times to an introspective sadness, are also natural, simple, and outspoken, more than many races. Having passed through a ragged Tatar village and climbed upwards, we reached Baidàr Gate, whence, as if by magic enchantment, we were enabled to look on the blue Euxine, seventeen hundred feet below. A wild grandeur marks the neighbouring cliffs and coastline, which are of strangely irregular outline. Our chauffeur took the sudden and numerous turns of the precipitous descent with coolness and skill, yet soon found it necessary to effect a slight repair, whereupon proceeding about a mile on foot, I was

Through Russia in War-time

challenged by a sentry, of course unable to decipher my passport. In a whimsical moment, to break the monotony of the situation, I presented him with a very fine apple, but the effect of my display of goodwill was that he forthwith called on comrades from a guard-house to take his place in barring the way and putting unintelligible questions, while at a few paces distance, with a sardonic smile, he enjoyed my gift. The new-comers were beginning to be rather disagreeable, when happily the car drove up. In a moment the friendly tchinòvnik called out that I was not a Nyèmetz, opposition disappeared, and I rejoined the party. The approach to Yàlta was unintermittently delightful. Gradually the gigantic boulders about us disappeared and the surroundings grew less stony, but far below bold crags of limestone rose splendidly in the blue water. Then cypresses appeared and walnut-trees and vineyards. At last we looked down on gleaming Livadia, the Tsar's magnificent southern palace; then at surpassing Yàlta, which, with its immediate background of pine-covered mountains four thousand feet high, and its bright villas and shops and promenade by the edge of the sea, awoke my unbounded admiration.

Setting out on foot to the waterfall of Utchàn-Su, or 'Flying Water,' I learned how pitilessly the sun's rays can strike on a shadeless road in the Crimea. Soon appeared by a farm a fine Tatar shepherd, a man of dark, almost chocolate-coloured complexion, wearing a huge, shaggy black busby,

The Crimea

while his large cloak and swathed legs and bast shoes of plaited bark made him indeed picturesque. Another of his race offered to show me a method of shortening the way. Perhaps he did not know much Russian: at all events, he evinced no surprise at the scantiness of my vocabulary. These Nogai Tatars (the name is that of an ancient leader) have, curiously enough, lost some of the physical characteristics of their race. While their eyes are not obliquely inclined, the nose is large and prominent, which traits may be due to mixture with Greek or Semitic blood. After crossing a deep and bare ravine the road entered thick pine forests, containing 'dàtchas' (villas), brightened by the presence of young men not temporarily disdainful of such items of national dress as the white shirt with red embroidery, even the blue trousers, whose very generous dimensions dwarf long boots. Though the waterfall, under the steep slope of Mount Yàila, gave evidence of summer drought, the view therefrom of distant Yàlta and the coast was exquisite. It is said that the Tsar's subjects are not great walkers, but hither had come a young Russian and his wife, both lightly knapsacked, and well able to enjoy the expedition.

If under the blight of war the pretty gardens in Yàlta were far from thronged, even during an open-air concert, nevertheless the town did not lack essential qualities of a little paradise given over to the pursuit of human happiness. A hotel in every way comfortable and far from costly, perhaps because the season was not yet at its height,

Through Russia in War-time

received me; but how great astonishment did I not cause by announcing my intention of actually walking to Gurzùf, a tiny place nine miles farther eastward on the coast! My luggage followed by linèika, a strange, hooded four-wheeled trap, wherein the passengers sit back to back, letting the legs dangle down. A continuous climb among vineyards afforded a fine outlook over the sea, but the glare and heat were great, and it was pleasant to come by the wayside on a fine walnut-tree, which solaced me with welcome shade and plenty of fruit. At Nikèeta I idled awhile in a little shop kept by a woman, who, plaintively and frequently remarking, "Zhark" ("Hot"), effected frequent sales of tobacco and matches to various men for the sum of ten kopecks. I learnt from her that the Tatars keep to the hills, the Russians to the lower ground. Then, having visited some lovely acclimatization gardens, rich in date-palms, I continued to ascend no more among festooning vines, but in forest; when, chancing to look round, I perceived a mounted gendarme, who, evidently satisfied that I was on the journey indicated, returned in the direction of Yàlta. So, past oak and ash and cedar and substantial farm buildings, I kept on, until a descent brought a posting-station, which I made bold to enter with a request, favourably regarded, for 'stakàn tchàioo.' Into this large straggling place, surrounded by stables, a postman, who may have come from the interior, drove up, armed with revolver and a sabre. Before long, from the end of the road, arose superb views

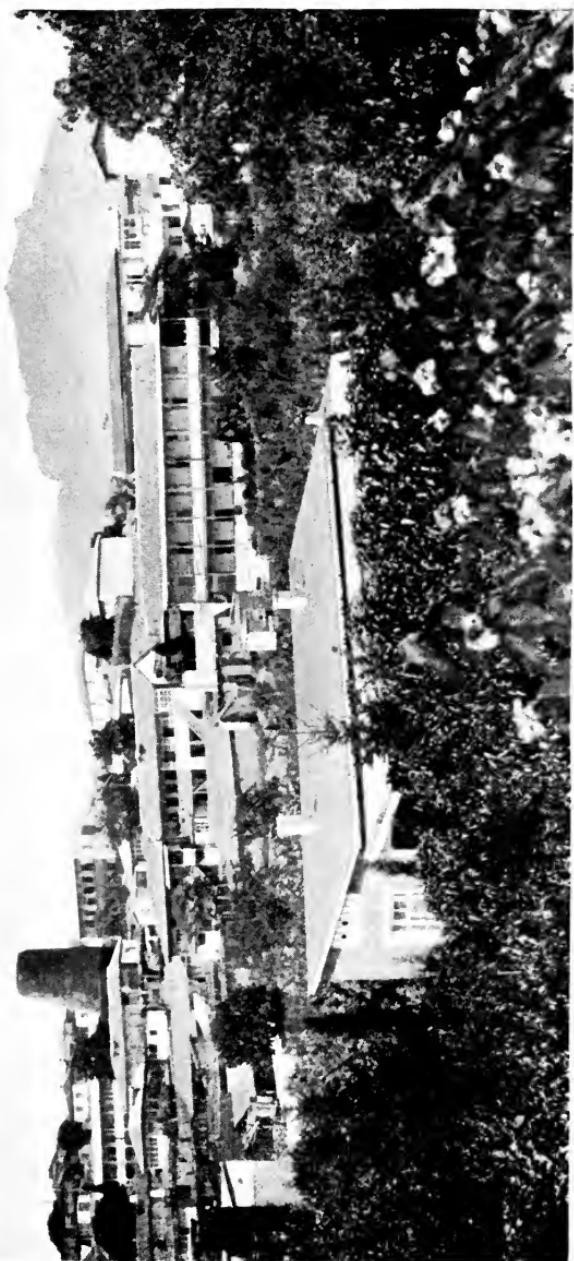
The Crimea

of the rounded extraordinary headland, Cap Aiou-Dagh, or the ‘Bear,’ of also two shining high rocks in the sea, and, in the nearer distance, a mosque and its minaret and the houses of Gurzùf. A white-bearded old Tatar, who allowed me to point my pocket-camera at him as I approached the village, seemed shrewd and intelligent. Proudly he said that though seventy he was still able to follow his calling as a porter. An attractive spot is this fashionable and secluded bathing resort, with its eight superior villas providing apartments for visitors, and its pleasant casino restaurant, whose patriotic head waiter must assure himself of my nationality—a just and proper thing to do in wartime. Several of the visitors here were of aristocratic bearing.

The lively village of Gurzùf has a charming situation overlooking the sea. In its little street sat at their easels two artists, one of whom had taken as his subject the tiny whitewashed mosque and a stone fountain with Tatar boys playing on its steps ; the other was satisfied with the contrast afforded by blue sky and the old and heavy projecting timbers of two roofs between which it was visible. Entering one of the Tatar cafés, I obtained, at a cost of five kopecks, a cup of excellent Turkish coffee. At a table a young man perused a book in Greek characters, but instead of further watching frequenters of the place, I set forth inland in glorious headland scenery. Accosted by two Tatars, one of whom had very Mongol features, I mistook at first their words demanding ‘tchas’

Through Russia in War-time

(the hour) for ‘na tchai’ (a tip), so gave them, before complying with their request, a small sum, in acknowledgment whereof, doubtless much astonished, they bowed low. Farther on, near a hamlet where Tatars and Russians were carrying on together some road work, a screen of drying tobacco leaves was noticeable before the veranda of a house. Bold and impressive is this mountainous coast and altogether remarkable; but romantic Gurzuf, in whose fine horticultural gardens the poet Pushkin once resided, proved a place difficult to quit. However, after some delay and a necessary display of energy, I obtained a seat in a motor-car passing along the high-road, and, at the rather high cost of ten roubles, travelled twenty miles to Alushta. This is another lovely small town lying between the sea and two imposing, almost table mountains, Tchatyr-Dagh and Demerdji Iaila. Here I noted great flowering shrubs; the well-preserved remains, in the native part of the place, of a high Byzantine structure resembling somewhat the Irish round towers; a working population of Tatars, mostly coarse-featured (though the women are not unrefined of face), and a delightful beach, in whose neighbourhood animated young Russian ladies, in pretty white costumes, fluttered about to see the last of friends departing by the diligence. What chivalrous deference marked a certain young man’s bearing as, bidding farewell to a lady, he bent low and kissed her hand! Next day another motor-car took me up among the smooth, bare mountains, and through



ALUSHTA,



The Crimea

immense forests of beech-trees, to a place of considerable importance.

Simferòpol is a Government town on the pretty little River Salgir, running alongside the 'Gorod-skòy Sad,' or Public Gardens. Near them, in an orchard, recruits were being drilled and practised in physical exercises under the direction of an instructor so powerful that he could perform astonishing feats with a rifle. Strolling out after dark, I was lured in a particular direction by loud warlike shouts, which proceeded from soldiers marching about twenty abreast while they sang folk-songs in the market-place. Curious was the sight presented by that open square the following morning ! Very dark - complexioned Tatars, including hundreds of women wearing white head-kerchiefs and bright dresses, had come in from the country to sell fruit, vegetables, and toys, which lay upon the ground. But in the town people of this race inhabit narrow streets in a definite quarter containing several unimpressive mosques.

The train bore me soon to a far more interesting relic of Tatar domination, namely, Bàktchée Serài, or 'Palace of Gardens,' the Khans' seat of government during a three-hundred-year period, which ended in the reign of Catherine the Great. In a great limestone gorge, and by the banks of a narrow stream, runs the long, insignificant street of the town. The one-storied houses are covered by projecting heavily tiled roofs, and the open shops, mostly lacking glass windows, have shutters which are lowered to form counters. Here

Through Russia in War-time

can be watched the manufacture of shoes in one piece of leather, rude whips having a single thong cut from hide, and a kind of vermicelli, made by letting fall in circles from a dredger a pasty mixture on to a hot stove. Several gendarmes walked up and down the narrow thoroughfare, but the Russians were few. Here I was able to buy of a newsboy a paper printed in Turkish character. With the exception of two or three wearing white veils, the females had their faces exposed, and it was a very pretty sight when about a dozen women and girls wearing head-kerchiefs of different bright colours drove along in a *telèga*. I obtained accommodation at an inn where the windows of the apartments told on to a gallery surrounding a courtyard. The maid-servant was a raw country girl with bare feet, and she complained bitterly to a Russian gentleman farmer (who, in conversing with me in French on the veranda, had spoken of three successive foreign tutors during his boyhood) that I was a 'Nyèmetz' and very difficult to understand. Though she brought me some borsch and a dish of mutton and rice and other creature comforts, her hostility remained undispersed. Almost opposite the inn rises a mosque, and from a little gallery of its minaret, at half-past twelve, the muezzin delivered his wailing summons to prayer. In a few minutes some of the faithful arrived. The building was a plain oblong, the corner pane in each window being coloured, and the floor strewn with large Persian rugs. The mullah knelt in a squatting attitude in front of some texts on the

WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN A TELÈGA. BÄKTCHEE SERÄI.

To face p. 132.



• • • • • • • • •

The Crimea

wall and read from the Koran, while about twenty true believers, having removed their boots and shown themselves stockingless, assumed similar positions at equal distances from each other. Baktchee Serai is truly Oriental, and at night-time the illumination by electric lamps of five minarets along the street seemed incongruous. Two of these structures, very tall and beautifully carved in stone, belong to the mosque of the Khanserai, or Palace of the Khans, a low, white, two-storied building, lighted over the porch by three contiguous pointed windows, and relieved by coloured ornamentation suggesting stencil-work on the walls. There were luxurious vines and an outside staircase within the court. The palace is built round some inner grounds, and has fallen into disrepair, but, accompanying strangers, I inspected many cool, dark rooms furnished with divans. In the women's portion a wooden grating screens a spacious balcony. A pretty inner court is distinguished by water trickling down from ledge to ledge of a little fountain, and so entering a bath three or four feet deep. Large gardens within the palace walls afforded an opportunity for a few Tatar visitors (of whom one or two were young exquisites accompanied by ladies) to promenade and pay scant attention to a band rendering the works of light composers in a somewhat violent manner. Thus a huge tambourine and hoarse clarionets of much force combined with other instruments to produce a galloping cacophony. A restful café in the main street

Through Russia in War-time

provided me a good cup of Turkish coffee. Then a stroll into down-like pasture country revealed an idyllic scene, near a prosperous farm, namely a flock of goats being milked by men, one of whom had strangely sandy hair. But on the same grassy slopes appeared a far different spectacle, an unenclosed resting-place for the dead. The inscriptions on tiny upright gravestones, terminating above in a rounded knob, doubtless spoke of religious beliefs. Next morning at the moment of departure the landlord, who had a more purely Mongol cast of features than most of the inhabitants, entered silently, but with an easy air, the comfortable, hooded, and two-horsed carriage which conveyed me to the station. On the way I exchanged a few sentences with my uninvited guest.

At Simferopol the intricacies of the 'Ukazatel,' or railway guide, were not mastered without loss of equanimity. The book had given but the minutest warning that a service of trains was conditional. Usually at the station a good deal is done for the traveller by the 'nosèelshcheek,' a numbered porter, who, taking possession generally, buys the ticket if wished, attends to the weighing of luggage if that is necessary, and, always grasping such effects as he can handle, fights his way through a corridor carriage till he secures a place. For his kindness you pay him thirty or forty kopecks. Having to spend another night at this town, I was not without recompense. In the first place, at an open window across the street in the morning, a little girl was visible as



THE MUEZZIN'S CALL TO PRAYER. BAKTCHEE SERÀI.

To face p. 134.



The Crimea

she brushed her doll's flaxen hair with touching maternal solicitude. In the second, I met an interesting character, a pale-faced, dark-eyed, intelligent native of Monastir, who, now keeping a restaurant at Simferopol after a career as an optician in the United States, seemed delighted once more to speak English. Strange was his delight in tracing his homeward progress across Europe on my map, and his devotion to an old-fashioned expletive! Thus he said, "Bigod, the English have, bigod, plenty to do in the Dardanelles, bigod!" But next this friendly broad-foreheaded and handsome Albanian, of proclivity to forcible expression, assured me, in reply to my inquiry, that, despite suppression of the usual steamer traffic, travellers could pass from Kertch to the Caucasus. It was good news, as I had read of celebrated kurgans at the entrance to the Sea of Azov, and the route across the straits seemed direct. On the way from Simferopol to Kertch one of the humours of travelling fell to my lot. The 'nosèelshcheek' gave me a corner into which, although not facing the engine, I was glad to sink, suffering probably from a slight malarial prostration. But a matron opposite, becoming for some reason irate, forthwith addressed her husband querulously and without cessation. The gentleman preserved unbrokenly an admirable outward composure. At last it dawned upon me that his wife coveted my seat, which I most readily relinquished, to find the breeze due to the train's motion very pleasant. Most charming fellow-travellers this

Through Russia in War-time

pair proved, the lady, once she had got her way, becoming friendly, and the gentleman singing a line or two of "Tipperary," and adjuring the officials to take good care of the Englishman unable to speak Russian. Consequently, during the next day's railway journey, special attention was vouchsafed me. But, ere saying good-bye, the fair passenger remarked, "Then you understood what I said before we changed places?" It was nearer the truth, and therefore better, to answer "Yes" than "No," even for one who imagined that, dilating in French on his supposed lack of chivalry, the lady may have used other expressions than the few severe words which fell on his ear.

In time the conductor appeared, saying further progress to Kertch was impossible before the morrow. Therefore it became necessary to visit and find quarters for the night at Theodosia, a pretty seaside place, built on the site of Kaffa, which, till near the end of the eighteenth century, saw Crim Tatars sell captured Christians to the Turks. The next day's journey disclosed steppe not devoid of rude pasture and wheat crops. A few scattered small cottages with tiled roofs above yellow plaster walls came in sight, while, here and there, as if to prepare me for the wonders of Kertch, several kurgans, or tumuli, occurred together.

CHAPTER X

KERTCH AND THE KUBĀN

KERTCH is beautifully situated where once stood Panticapæum, a residence of that renowned monarch Mithridates the Great, who, at last retreating before Roman might, was here besieged by his treacherous son Pharnaces. Near the town's centre a truly magnificent view, obtainable from the 'Hill of Mithridates,' combines with historic association to stir the traveller's soul. Around the height lie a district of busy streets (replacing houses levelled by the Allies during the Crimean War), a part of the Sea of Azov, a harbour, an immense fort, and an amphitheatre of hills surmounted by a score and a half of kurgāns reminiscent of ancient life and burial.

Half-way up this hill a temple-like museum displays sculptures in yellow stone of mounted warriors with well-preserved inscriptions in Greek characters; also fish-hooks and bluish iridescent glass vases and fragments of coloured plaster as if from interior walls, and many other indications of ancient civilization. Having obtained an apartment at the Central'naya Hotel, near the foot of the hill, I found I must take on the additional name 'Ivànovitch,' and thus

Through Russia in War-time

reveal to the authorities that I am, like many a Russian, the son of John. As for breakfast, strolling forth by the water's edge I enjoyed that meal at a lone café, a resort probably of mariners, since on a wall hung some charts of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. Doubtless, the present World-War, including as it does a contest for freedom of outlet and mastery of the seas in the near East, is a stupendously important matter for Kertch and other centres of commerce on the Euxine. The town is lively, and has pleasant boulevards and an esplanade with a Kursaal, also restaurants overlooking the sea, where the visitor can learn the taste of kumiss, or mare's milk in an effervescent and slightly sour condition. Desirous of finding some one who could repair a portmanteau, and exploring the place with such purpose, I concluded that the industrial population, as in many parts of the Tsar's dominions, is to a considerable extent Hebrew. My dominant hope was to visit the chief among several kurgāns opened in the neighbourhood; and so to a particular lofty mound, happily within a reasonable distance, I bent my steps, undeterred by the high temperature, imagining that advantageous knowledge, whether of a locality or its inhabitants, accrues to one who relies, in a foreign land, on his unaided powers. Having advanced on the steppe, some way beyond the town's outskirts, where single-floored houses, painted a blue colour, are regularly joined together into streets, I halted at a farmhouse in the hope of purchasing a glass of milk, but the farmer's wife scowlingly refused

Kertch and the Kubàn

me, nor called off with any alacrity two yelping and snapping dogs. However, when I reached the Tsar Kurgàn, its custodian brought me, in an earthenware jar, about a pint of the drink I coveted, besides a piece of coarse white bread. Along the sides of an excavated approach, roofed with overlapping stones, and leading to the tomb, stand many fine carvings in deep relief, including a representation of armed horsemen, while one of the Greek inscriptions includes, ‘ΘΕΟΦΑΝ ΔΙΟΝΤΣ ΧΑΙΡΕ’ ('Theophanes : hail Dionysos !'), words distinctive of pagan mythology. The stone interior of this circular kurgàn is about thirty feet in diameter, twice as high, and beautifully yet not smoothly arched, and it reminded me, by its perfect execution and beehive shape, of the larger and more renowned ‘tomb of Agamemnon’ at Mycenæ. From the elderly and intelligent caretaker I heard that the huge mound probably came into being through the labour of the captives of the potentate Mithridates.

Inquiries in Kertch revealed that, though the usual route by sea and rail to Vladikavkàz, the northern capital of the Caucasus, was closed owing to the war, it would be possible to travel by steamboat across the Straits of Azov, then journey forty miles from Tamàn to Tyemròok in a fòurgon, or covered wagon, next ascend the river Kubàn to Ekaterinodar, and lastly entrain for Vladikavkàz. After some hesitation before plunging so far into the Unknown, I determined to make the venture. The small steamer *Bâbooshka* (grandmother) started twenty minutes before the moment of departure given me on the

Through Russia in War-time

previous evening by the mate, who had command of a few English words ; but fortunately, when I arrived, the last rope had yet to be loosed. A pleasant voyage of three hours, at a cost of but sixty kopecks, brought me to a jetty, near which I struck a bargain with the controller of the fôurgon service, who, if he had guessed my helplessness, might have been tempted to charge me exorbitantly ; but he fixed the figure at five roubles, with the proviso that other persons might ride with me. Except for its ramshackle appearance, and the dilapidated condition of the harness, whose numerous deficiencies were made good with pieces of string, the vehicle recalled a rural carrier's cart, though it had little doors high on either side, and above them unglazed windows. A generous supply of hay covered the floor and, placed crossways, two enormous bolster-shaped sacks, full of the same material, formed comfortable seats. In the course of a slow progress through the town of Tamàn, we took up passengers, including an urbane bank manager moving afield to sell wheat. Before long he kindly produced, for my edification, three bags of samples, as well as his Cossack hat and dagger. Two wholesome and comely peasant women, with uncovered feet but a simple self-respecting demeanour, came next, while last entered a youth who presently evinced suspicions concerning my character. He wore a cloth-peaked cap, while the driver boasted a loofah helmet, but both were attired in typical Russian costume—that is, a short shirt, confined by a belt, outside dark trousers tucked

Kertch and the Kubàn

into top-boots. The young man having learnt that, in years past, I had practised the noble profession of Medicine—for it was impossible for me in such circumstances not to give some account of myself—grew eager to learn if I was a member of, or about to join, the Surgical Department of any Army, more particularly that of the Caucasus. However, the friendly Cossack gave him a hint to restrain his curiosity. As for the yemshchìk, tireless in his efforts to get all possible work out of his team of three horses abreast—that is, a ‘tròika’—he wielded skilfully and, I am sorry to say, assiduously a whip whose thong was composed of a long narrow strip of hardened leather; and, though the objects of his attention were small and spare, they worked hard and looked better than many of the steeds behind which I sat on later occasions. The novelty of my position exhilarated me and, though unable to exchange more than a few remarks, yet listening, I could note that the word ‘kopyèek’ recurred in the conversation frequently. It chanced that I possessed some eatables, such as chocolate and macaroons, and bottles of kvas, which my companions honoured me by sharing, and the younger woman generously distributed sunflower seeds from her bundle. The track lay across the monotonous steppe, here and there under wheat, and with in one place a threshing machine at work. After four hours’ travelling across level ground, the fòurgons halted at a fishing hamlet on the shore of the Sea of Azov, wherein, the weather being delightful, the whole party proceeded to bathe, the men taking

Through Russia in War-time

the water perhaps a hundred yards from the ladies, who deftly wrapped about themselves towels. At hand, in a neighbourhood of nets, stood some white-walled thatched cottages, and one of our number induced a fisherman's wife to make tea and set a table outside in the shade. Meanwhile, observing that I had a camera, the elder of the peasant women politely asked me to take a picture. With the samovar appeared a loaf of tolerably white bread, having tasted which, we were better enabled to continue our journey along the shore, and past an endless succession of isolated cottages like those of the hamlet. Next a boy ran up with a sack containing small crayfish, and for a few kopecks he parted with a goodly number, consumption of which gave my fellow-travellers much satisfaction. But our progress became slow. The River Kubàn, having continued several months in flood, set both driver and horses a heavy task. Off and on during several hours, through great stretches of level country, the axles were submerged, but our charioteer never relaxed his efforts, and once or twice a boy or a man, with trousers tucked up, sprang out of gloom made more complete by our lack of lights and guided the horses. Sometimes the 'yemshchik' dismounted and, wading, held excited discussions with ghostly inhabitants. Then in solitude, amid increasing darkness of night, a huge yellow moon, vouchsafing her presence above the horizon, rose gradually higher. By now the two men lay asleep, and the women dozed, while over the great expanse of flood two lights appeared among some far-distant

COSACK WOMEN.





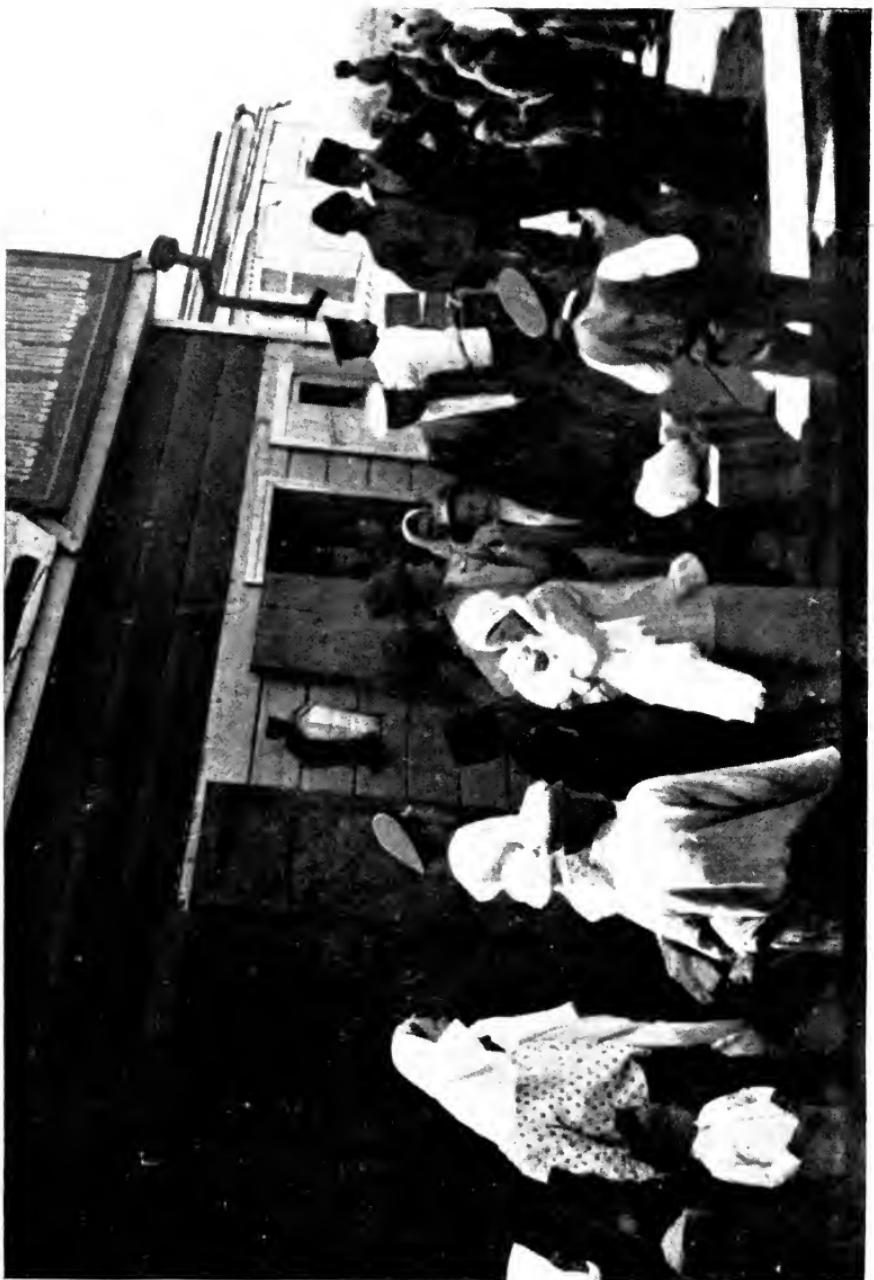
Kertch and the Kubàn

trees. How long a time elapsed before those cheering yet humble luminaries suddenly tripled their number ! But, having at eleven o'clock crossed the Kubàn by a bridge, either end of which was guarded by a long pole raised to allow admittance, we entered the scattered town of Tyemròok ; whereupon, the 'yemshchìk' considerately aided me to find accommodation at a Gostìnnitza, thus relieving a doubt in my mind as to whether my stock of Russian would prove adequate in a remote Cossack centre.

Looking about on the next morning, a Sunday, I found activity reigning in the market-place, where peasant women sat on benches behind long tables supporting their wares. In this little town, which has several tolerable inns, the cost of living seemed moderate, the isvòstchik's fare for conveying me to a wharf, which was under the dominion of swarthy Tatar stevedores, amounting to no more than the equivalent of threepence. As for the vessel proceeding up the Kubàn, it had, as usual, a fine promenade deck. Despite flatness reigning ashore, the vistas continued not uninteresting. In the distance to the south the Kubànsky mountains attained a considerable altitude, while, as it passed through green country, the river supported a good many barges and boats. The sinuous Kubàn, perhaps a hundred and fifty yards wide, presented an unusual pale and dirty colour, and its muddy banks, like those of the lower Dneiper, were often lined with a free growth of sallows and black poplars. But the stream grew broader and the banks became covered with green bamboos, and a little way off

Through Russia in War-time

some low hills displayed wheat-stacks. Here and there were visible herds of cattle, or some hundreds of horses, or clearings with an occasional small white or blue cottage, untidily thatched, and having a small window. Occasionally three or four women could be seen sitting in a row on the low banks of the stream, while often considerable numbers of white geese stood solemnly as if passing judgment on the water-borne traffic. At the first landing-station, six Cossack soldiers in yellow tunics and high grey headgear, coming on board, took up a position together on a bench of the upper deck. But a different sign of life attracted my attention in this smiling country, since many young men, wearing large black astrakhan hats, strolled with girls along the paths upon that beautiful afternoon. The call to arms had already become imperious throughout the Empire. Wherefore one saw, at the landing-stages, brave fellows forsake kindred to travel by our vessel. A touching and romantic farewell occurred between a pretty girl and a magnificent Cossack. As they faced one another she stroked and caressed the broad dagger at his belt, while he, looking down tenderly, said but a word or two, and after a hurried embrace, joined his departing comrades. Sadder and more moving grew the scene if, at a spot where perhaps stood several mothers with babes in their arms, a matron wept aloud and could scarcely be separated from the stalwart husband to whom she clung. His country's needs took him from her side at an hour when she might well expect that life's conditions should be softened



BIDDING FAREWELL TO COSSACK SOLDIERS.



Kertch and the Kubàn

for her. Tried so by Fate, the poor frantic creature was held and comforted by friends. The river boat proved tolerably comfortable, and afforded me sleeping accommodation in a cabin occupied by three other passengers, among them a lady. At that time the English Government had not begun to create a gigantic organization for the manufacture of war material, and I was surprised when shown, in this remote district of Russia, peasants starting off at an early hour to work in swiftly extemporized military factories. The vast nature of the struggle had already dawned on the country of the Tsar. Territory had been lost, but stern preparation for new armies and munitions was in progress on an unprecedented scale.

At Ekaterinaberg, a large and prosperous city, I went during service into a fine church, well lighted, as are most of the new Russian sacred edifices. Behind the ikonostàs, separation of some red curtains opened a view into the Holy of Holies, which was entered by two priests. Soon one of them came forth with a covered cup and administered a first Communion to several infants. The wine, apparently thickened by syrup, was given in a spoon and, when the mothers had passed on with their treasures, a little old man slipped forward and in like manner received the rite.

CHAPTER XI

VLADIKAVKÀZ TO KASBÈK

CONTINUING my journey for a day and a night by train to Vladikavkàz, the Ossetian capital finely situated on the northern slope of the Caucasus, I hoped to proceed to Tiflìs by diligence, for a friend at Odessa had counselled me to take advantage of a five - horsed coach service boasting a postilion so agile that, whatever the speed at which the vehicle was moving, he frequently changed his position from the back of one animal to that of another. But, having found the posting-house, I failed to make even my chief purpose intelligible to the white-bearded official in charge. Happily two young ladies entered during the interview, and one of them, showing a knowledge of French, kindly interpreted for me. Now, a traveller, unsupported by recommendations, is altogether in the hands of the postmaster. I was given to understand that I could not advance till the following afternoon. Making the best use of my time, I visited some public gardens. It was a fête day and offered, in addition to an open-air concert, interesting events. Children, dancing in couples, executed very graceful movements to music as they passed slowly round ;

Vladikavkàz to Kasbèk

indeed, for a while I was content to watch admiringly the steps of a little girl, despite her somewhat clumsy build. The peculiar feature of the dance was a seemingly careless, but altogether captivating, outward throw of the foot at regular intervals. Elsewhere other children, going through gymnastic exercises, vaulted across a wooden horse with more or less proficiency under the guidance of a muscular instructor ; and next, some young men waved, each at his separate station, Indian clubs, or made sudden violent motions at a word of command. Such displays are uncommon in Russia. Young officers in Cossack uniform sat about in groups smoking, or walked, or entered pleasure boats and rowed. In the evening I witnessed at a cinema building, made lively by an energetic band of music, a humorous fantasy which appeared highly popular. An interesting native industry of this well-laid-out town is engraving kinjáal, or dagger, cases with a chisel, and men so occupied can be watched in usual Eastern fashion at the open shops. But other sights making the place attractive to a visitor are the standing drivers of rude carts, the Ossetians in characteristic white costume of large, flexible, broad-brimmed hat, single-breasted frock-coat, and tight trousers ; the rough mountaineers enveloped in their 'bourka's' or long and heavy black cloaks, as well as numerous Cossack soldiers. The place, founded by Potemkin, the great Catherine's favourite, has strategic importance, since here begins the great Georgian military road to Tiflís. It is also a centre of Government and of traffic across the Caucasus.

Through Russia in War-time

Having driven to the posting station, I reconnoitred a huge untidy yard surrounded by stables sufficient for scores of horses, but found no mediaeval conveyance drawn by five fiery steeds. Instead, a commonplace hooded vehicle was ready to depart with three merchants or mountaineers. Of these, a dark, sombre, and bearded man suddenly came on to the veranda, took off his top-boots, threw down his 'bourka' and kneeling, bowed his forehead to the ground. Then he stood and muttered a prayer, knelt again, rose, resumed his footgear, and finally took his place for the journey. It had been decided to send me on alone. Perforce I was to post in a rude, but not disagreeable, equipage called a 'perekładnaya,' which was not an expensive mode of travelling, as it turned out, since the total stretch of 132 miles to Tiflis eventually cost but the equivalent of twenty-six shillings! Thus, at last, I found myself setting forth in solitary state upon the magnificent and costly Georgian military road, more or less master of my movements, for I could rest as seemed desirable at any posting station, and was at all events in no great haste. Over the first stage horses and harness were strong and good, but later, certainly in appearance, often the reverse. The body of my springless four-wheeled vehicle consisted of a shallow cradle resting on a long board, whose elasticity modified the rigours of the road. The driver in front sat like the traveller, on a stretched rude network of cord, softened by a few interposed handfuls of hay. He soon remarked on the splendour of the scene, which, traversing



A STREET IN VLADIKAVKÀZ.



THE GEORGIAN MILITARY ROAD. OSSETIANS.



Vladikavkàz to Kasbèk

at first a broad valley, before long began to penetrate lofty mountains. My responses may have seemed guarded, consisting as they did of an assent in the form of a freely reiterated "Kharashò" or "Good," set off by a declaration of nationality and an ingenuous confession of inability to understand much Russian. At Bàlta, the first posting station, whose large houses and stables stand among trees, isolated in the valley, I heard there were no available horses with which to continue the journey that evening, and was shown without delay to a comfortable room. Among several men similarly disappointed and loitering about, stood my Mohammedan friend, soon to betake himself once more to prayer, much as before, but now on a little patch of grass. In about an hour the driver, seeking me excitedly, said that I could proceed. Then, at the last moment, his place was taken by a mute of tender heart, but righteously vindictive, as will forthwith appear. We had scarcely started, and now an Armenian lady, with a pearl and black velvet coronet over her brow, sat by my side in the 'pereklàdnaya,' when another similar carriage, arriving, drove past us to the station. It had four horses abreast, the two outer in a fearful condition of emaciation and sores. Instantly the dumb man fell into a paroxysm of rage. Uttering hoarse sounds and frothing at the mouth, he thrust the reins in my hands and, having rushed after the new equipage, returned in a few minutes with the neglected beasts. Making violent inarticulate threats and passionate facial contortions, he produced pieces of rope and proceeded to harness lightly to our

Through Russia in War-time

own conveyance the rescued horses. But almost immediately, and before his task was completed, a motor-car trying to pass caused our team to swerve. The mute, in his manful endeavours to allay its fright, was pushed against a stone wall and suffered an injury to his knee. Yet the poor fellow continued full of spirit. A shower of foam again issued from his mouth, and deep imprecatory sounds from his throat, until the careless and thoughtless chauffeur, desisting, chose another path. Thus the mute was left, first to curse the cause of his later misfortune and complain of pain, and next continuously to foreshadow the speedy revenge he would inflict on the callous driver, who, as I presumed, had first borrowed and then ill-treated the two recovered horses. A flashing look, a head jerked towards the supposed whereabouts of the offender, and vigorous pantomime indicated that the miscreant's eyes would be plucked out, his teeth dragged forth, and his throat cut. At last the exhibition of rage somewhat abated and, while the sun sank from view behind gloomy mountains, we began a journey of sixteen versts. Nevertheless the dumb man's intense feeling surged intermittently, and then he pointed mournfully to the starved horses, first one and then the other of which he allowed to run free by clever adjustment of the rope harness.

Numerous towers of refuge were visible on this drive. Sometimes they loomed forth of a rounded shape, at others square, and even, not unusually, one side seemed slightly inclined and another perpendicular. The tiniest possible window aperture

Vladikavkàz to Kasbèk

occasionally graced these crude and primitive stone buildings, one of which exists close to Vladikavkàz and reaches perhaps a height of sixty feet, while, nearer Lars, another stands out prominently on a projecting rock. Perched on a sloping mountain-side, the hamlets, with their towers twenty or thirty feet in diameter at the base, have a remarkable effect. As I gazed at the ruins of these wretched strongholds I could not help thinking of the multitudinous feudal castles in Germany. But if such places arose in eras of imperfect civilization, they also flourished in far more advanced conditions, as during the early years of the Italian renaissance. Who that has gazed on the mighty towers of refuge at San Gimignano can ever forget them? After a while we passed, on the left, in a wide part of the valley a large, low brick fort called Dzheràkhovski, which is sometimes used by the Russian troops as a centre for manœuvres.

The pale-faced Armenian by my side proved to be the wife of the landlord at the next posting station, and I learned from her that I should have to repose in the common room. She was kind enough to point out one or two famous features of the landscape, such as a great tower and particularly impressive and monstrous rocks. As darkness set in the road grew narrow and difficult, long stretches of it being under repair, and I marvelled that we proceeded so surely without lights. However, some time after threading our way through a village, we drew up at the station. Entering a small guest - room, I became, as an Englishman,

Through Russia in War-time

an object of interest to my host's children. A young daughter brought me tea and eggs and bread and cheese. Dear child, how simply she explained later, when I had declined the offer of a small mattress, that it was her own! The sleeping apartment, though large, was devoid of furniture save a single hard couch in a corner. I lay down on this, but did not bolt the door, since I thought that another traveller might arrive. The night was sufficiently cold to prevent sound slumber, but further I was disturbed by some one who, stealing up, as if to make sure of my presence, became satisfied and quickly departed. In the morning after I had risen and gone outside, a party of travellers of seeming importance partook of breakfast in this common room, where two of them sat at table in enormous white sheepskin hats. The charge for my supper, couch, and morning meal amounted to less than a rouble. Here I made the acquaintance of several interesting characters, such as a tall and frank young Ossetian hunter of various animals including the 'tur' (or ibex) and bear. With him he had his rifle. A rosy-cheeked boy was as merry and roguish as a white-bearded grandfather appeared portentously grave. My Moslems of the previous evening arrived in a hooded carriage, and one of them proved to be a member of a small mountain tribe, the Igloosh. Each wore a black sheepskin hat and the graceful tcherkess or loose-sleeved coat which, adorned right and left on the breast with a 'khaziv,' or imitation row of cartridge cases, was tight at the waist and voluminous of skirt; and, of course,

Vladikavkàz to Kasbèk

each carried, slanting across the front of his belt, the kinjàal or broad dagger. Without being hostile, they were direct and almost curt of speech. "As you are a doctor," said one of them, "look at my swollen eye and tell me what I should do!" Thereupon I recommended certain applications of warm water, which simple advice was to bring me a modicum of fame. Though the light was poor, my Armenian landlady very obligingly posed for me, and assumed the national head-dress which is also that of the Georgians. This consists of the lightest possible framework, shaped like a tiny smoking cap, and surrounded by a black velvet band. Enveloping this, and thrown back from the face, is a white muslin veil reaching the waist. Before leaving Lars, I inspected the enormous Yermòlov stone that, standing in the bed of the rushing Tèrek, has a length, it is said, of nearly a hundred feet, a width of fifty, and a height of forty-two.

The Georgian military road, sole means of communication southwards from Vladikavkàz, that is, to Tiflìs, proceeds first beside but against the course of the Tèrek River, and next, having reached the summit of the Pass, follows the downward course of the Aràgva River. As it mounted at present, the way, becoming even more gloomy and desolate, was flanked by dark, precipitous mountains. Hardly any trees were visible, for the Russian general pitted against Shamyl, the prophet and Lesghian leader, found necessary to cut them down that he might sooner end a guerilla warfare. After a few versts

Through Russia in War-time

we entered a wonderful gorge which, though narrowing, yet remained wide enough for torrent and road to exist side by side. It is the immensity of the rocky walls and their forbidding character which have brought the defile of Daryàl such renown. One felt in, not a transient manifestation of Nature's sternness but, the very heart of a tremendous district abounding in chasms and abysses. On the right, and quite low, lay Daryàl Fort, loopholed and of stronger appearance than the previous fort, because now two round towers commanded the road. At a toll bar, painted with black and white diagonals, a sentry inspected my papers, but made no charge for permission to pass. Then a stranger sight disclosed itself. Immediately farther on, in the valley, rises a separate enormous, rocky height upon which, as is said, exist ruins of an old castle spoken of by some writers as that of Tamàra and by others as Daryàl. The whole of the Caucasus is alive with legend and romance, so it is not surprising that a story should cling to this ancient stronghold. Once upon a time a queen lived here who, tiring of her husband, had him thrown over the precipice and then, luring others in turn to take his place, inflicted a similar fate on each of them !

The land of the Ossetes should fascinate those who study the races of man. For this small tribe, alone among the numerous races of the Caucasus, possesses a language with an affinity to the Persian. All other tribes of this wild mountainous region are reported by the learned to resemble more the Mongolians, Finns, Hungarians, and Turks, in that

Vladikavkàz to Kasbèk

their speech is “agglutinative”—that is, employs many very long words made up of recognizably separate parts. In such languages the root of a word and its additions remain distinguishable. These non-Aryan languages, being employed by nomads have, as a first requisite, intelligibility among many individuals whose intercourse is scanty. But Ossetian is one of the Aryan tongues in which, as for instance French (so Professor Max Müller tells us), the root is often obscured. How a traveller misuses his opportunities! Three days later, a young Ossetian lady told me she was eighteen, and that it was her little nephew's second birthday. Had I asked her to express herself in her own tongue, instead of Russian, I might have learned the word for ‘age’ in Ossetian, and compared it with corresponding terms in other Aryan languages! But how could a little people, numbering perhaps a hundred thousand persons, have here acquired a solitary existence? When the Sarmatians, of Iranian breed, had overcome the Scythians in the fourth century before Christ, and then in turn been vanquished by Goths, probably a remnant of these Sarmatians escaped absorption and maintained their position in the neighbourhood of icebound Mount Kasbèk. Their speech hints at this strange secret! A thought like this might well excite attention to the absorbing comparative study of languages! If anything could now stimulate a sluggish mind to such devotion, it should be the recollection that, before my trip was accomplished, I held converse, though in a primitive manner, with representatives

Through Russia in War-time

of three out of four well-marked groups of the Caucasian races. For Ossetians were already around me; the Georgians or, to use the native word, Gruzinians, soon came into view as the chief inhabitants of Tiflis and the surrounding country, and in time Lesghians, a distinctive folk on the extreme east of the Caucasus, where the range ends on the shores of the Caspian, entered my ken. As for the Tcherkèsses or Circassians, who mostly migrated some sixty years ago from the north-west of the Caucasus range rather than submit to Russian domination, when passing near their land, I omitted to inquire whether any of the men were of the Tcherkèss breed. However, I had experience later at Kazàn, of a gentleman who, I am told, was probably a Circassian! Thus has the casual and ill-equipped wanderer to gather up crumbs of comfort and console himself for past failure in gaining information which may have been unattainable. Alas! one who is enthralled by the glamour of novel foreign scenes may devote insufficient attention to the most deserving records of a district. What an enviable and blest state must be that of a traveller, neither so addicted to the acquisition of lore as callously to force it aloud on persons around in the manner of occasionally offending lady visitors in picture-galleries, nor yet altogether unable to peruse, in proper season, massed details indigestibly set forth by the conscientious compilers of guide-books! However, everything does not conspire against the undisciplined wayfarer, even if he need the actual stimulus of a view to awaken his reading powers.



MOUNT KASBÈK.



Vladikavkàz to Kasbèk

On the present occasion the mute was again my 'yemshchìk,' or driver, and despite his affliction, the poor fellow could arouse my attention efficiently. We had crossed a bridge, guarded as usual by two sentries, one of whom demanded to inspect my passport, and were slowly continuing to ascend among dark and cheerless mountains, when suddenly my companion with more than his usual excitement pointed out a marvellous scene on the right. There, in the west, three or four miles away, lay the lesser peak of Kasbèk, covered by a mantle of dazzling white under a blue and cloudless sky. The man's face grew happy and eloquent as he led me where to gain the best view. That compact glistening surface, high up among so many immense masses of gloomy rock, forms indeed a spectacle of extraordinary beauty. From near this spot on the road a path leads to the village of Gevleti, whence the vigorous can attempt an ascent of Mount Kasbèk. Such an aspiration was scarcely for one who did not even reach a village remarkable for a strangely interesting object, namely an altar of stones whereon natives of the Tchentchen tribe place ibex horns to propitiate a god of whom apparently they can give no clear account. The Virgin Mary also is worshipped by them with primitive ceremony.

When the valley had opened out the loftier and eastern summit of Mount Kasbèk burst suddenly into view. At a happy distance from the roadway for magnificent effect rose, again upon the right, the majestic mountain whose sides were first successfully scaled by Mr. D. Freshfield and his party

Through Russia in War-time

in 1867. The peak suggests the Jungfrau attaining a sharper apex, amid dark and precipitous surroundings. Farther, and perched on the horizon line at an elevation of 1,500 feet, stood, indicating spiritual aspirations of past Georgian inhabitants, two-domed monastic ruins, while, below them and at the foot of some hilly slopes, appeared the flat-roofed dwellings of a hamlet. As I was taking in these details on the right, the 'perekładnaya' continued along the dusty road beside the Terek, a river separating us from an almost equally wonderful spectacle upon the left. There, many thousands of feet high, was a sheer wall, a frowning immensity giving by mere glimpses of snow at its top, a hint of what exists beyond, a glacier. At the very foot of this gigantic mountain-side lies Kasbèk village. A collection of houses with a church and only one easily discoverable shop cannot be called a town. Thus in the valley, which is half a mile or more wide, a river runs, and on one side stand a humble hamlet and a lovely snowy peak, while on the other side, and facing them, are situated the village of Kasbèk and a bare and tremendous mountain wall of a strange and terrifying beauty. For what is vast and unrelenting causes something akin to terror, even if its sublimity affects us greatly. Delight, wonder, awe, even a kind of fear are aroused by the northern part of the Caucasus. Crossing the Terek again, we drew up immediately at the posting station, and in the 'Stanzia Gostinnitza,' a large two-storied building with a restaurant and many rooms, a severely simple but clean apartment fell

Vladikavkàz to Kasbèk

to my share. It was noon and Mount Kasbèk shone forth in full glory. Not the smallest cloud had yet invaded the vast expanse of blue: an especially fortunate circumstance, since the peak is sometimes hidden during several days or even weeks. An irregular 'zàftrak' or luncheon fortified me for a walk, and here, as often in my wanderings, a not unpleasant element of chance attended the process of choosing dishes. Surprise could seldom be guarded against, as the signification of various difficult and generally ill-written names is slowly mastered. Sometimes I would point to a particular item on the list at haphazard, or rely on a general term, such as that for beef. But on the present occasion 'borsch,' a soup of palatable nature and astonishing appearance, was available. It contained, besides cabbage and meat, large red oily globules formed of the rich materials coloured by beetroot, one of the minor ingredients thrown into the saucepan. 'Shàslike,' or small pieces of mutton, as roasted on a skewer, followed. As for bread, no dearth of such, tolerably white, ever fell to my lot. While food is not dear in Russia, at least one article is often costly. Asking for butter at table, I was given a considerable quantity, but charged more than the equivalent of a shilling for what I often saw eaten as a dainty without bread. These good things and some 'agòurtsi,' or little soured gherkins, a generally favourite Russian dish, prepared me for the afternoon's expedition. Although large glass cupboards, arrayed with manifold bottles, stood behind the counter, their contents remained

Through Russia in War-time

under Imperial prohibition. However, iced 'citro,' a delicious and effervescent lemonade was procurable; a fortunate circumstance, since a long drive in a springless 'pereklàdnaya' during hot weather arouses a desire for kvas, or something like it. I set out in unbroken silence, for, except a few boys in white sheepskin hats, who had hung about in the roadway, and a squad of soldiers disappearing within barracks, scant sign of life had manifested itself in Kasbèk. The snowy peak seemed to insist on man's littleness and Nature's grandeur. Nor indeed has humanity advanced very materially in the immediate neighbourhood, as I perceived when attempting to approach the glittering cone. By using some rude stony paths I entered Gergèti, a hamlet composed of squalid flat-roofed dwellings, outside which wretched-looking men and women sat listlessly or reclined in the shade. Through the open doors I peered into dark and filthy interiors. The children, who were very wild, climbed like lizards up the walls of houses, putting their feet between the unmortared stones, or they gathered round me and offered to point out the way. But, for awhile, I went on alone past sure-footed and steady-nerved women employing their sickles on the long grass of steep slopes, or tearing up a coarse herbage. Farther on, as the path wound about green acclivities, some children appeared, of whom the tiniest raised her single calico garment as a fashionable lady might have treated costly skirts when crossing a muddy street. Then four little girls, with tousled locks and ragged garments, per-

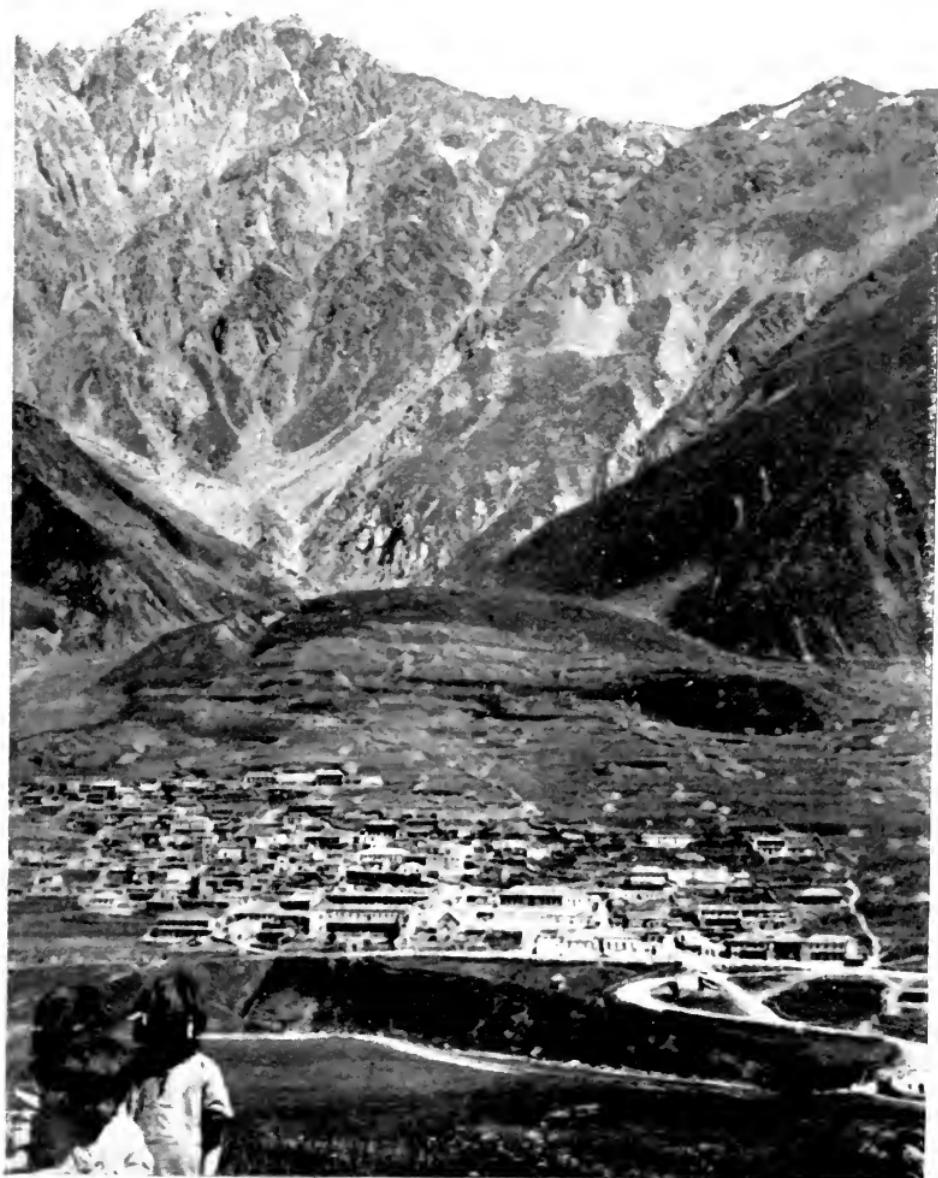
Vladikavkàz to Kasbèk

emptorily constituted themselves into a corps of guides, not altogether unnecessary since the paths branched. They giggled and hurried forward, or loitered and whispered, undecided of purpose, and one forsook the party. At last, after admiring my companions' agility, which had led me a good distance, I gave them trifling rewards and said good-bye, whereupon they presented me with a rude staff and a few wild strawberries. So I clambered on alone and got near the well-preserved ruins of the monastery church, which had been seen to such special advantage from the valley. Next my inclination took me in the opposite direction toward the mountain of ice, Kasbèk itself. Walking was pleasant and, in the ardour of the moment, produced no fatigue. At last, after climbing here and there, while the sun had scarcely begun to sink, I turned my thoughts, not only to strange customs of the mountain folk, but to the classical legend of the demi-god who, helping man, offended Zeus, and in this neighbourhood suffered a tragic fate. A stretch of grass under some bushes invited repose, and throwing myself down, I fell asleep. My rest, though uneasy, lasted some time and, possibly affected by physical changes around, for the sky was filled with dark clouds, I awoke troubled. Peal after peal of thunder reverberated through the mountains in the wake of vivid forked lightning, and scarcely had I time to reach the path leading to Gergèti before a sudden torrent of rain put me in a miserable plight. Outside the village a little girl with long, unkempt, and dishevelled but beautiful

Through Russia in War-time

auburn hair crouched near a wall. This was the child who had returned alone, and she now darted at me a look both furtive and intense. However, a few kopecks slipped into her hand brought a gleam of happiness to her face. Only a short distance remained to be traversed and I reached home safely. But my mind was filled with strange ideas that afternoon in the shadow of Mount Kasbèk. I seemed to hear words, as of Prometheus, reproaching men for misuse of his gift of fire. The desperate struggle against ruthless militarism could not be forgotten even so far away from the scenes of conflict.





KASBÈK.

To face p. 163.

CHAPTER XII

KASBÈK AND BEYOND

EARLY next morning I walked among the primitive houses of Kasbèk. Great dogs, like white St. Bernards, barked defiance from the flat roofs, which have a special interest, since frequently they are covered either with ten or twelve inches of earth for the cultivation, at certain seasons, of vegetables, or with a fine stony material. The inhabitants may pass directly from sloping paths on to the tops of the dwellings. The way from one home to another lies generally through an untidy yard, and the alleys and lanes are very irregular. Some of the habitations possess a second story reached by an outer staircase of stone. The people seemed more prosperous and intelligent than those at Gergèti, opposite, but they follow the same occupations, namely, tillage on a small scale, or rearing cattle, or pursuing the tur. A traveller,¹ supplying a valuable narrative, relates that a hunter, having promised him sport in this neighbourhood, would not fire a gun because a corpse lay unburied. He tells us that Pushkin found a funeral party who did not desist from

¹ Captain Telfer, R.N.

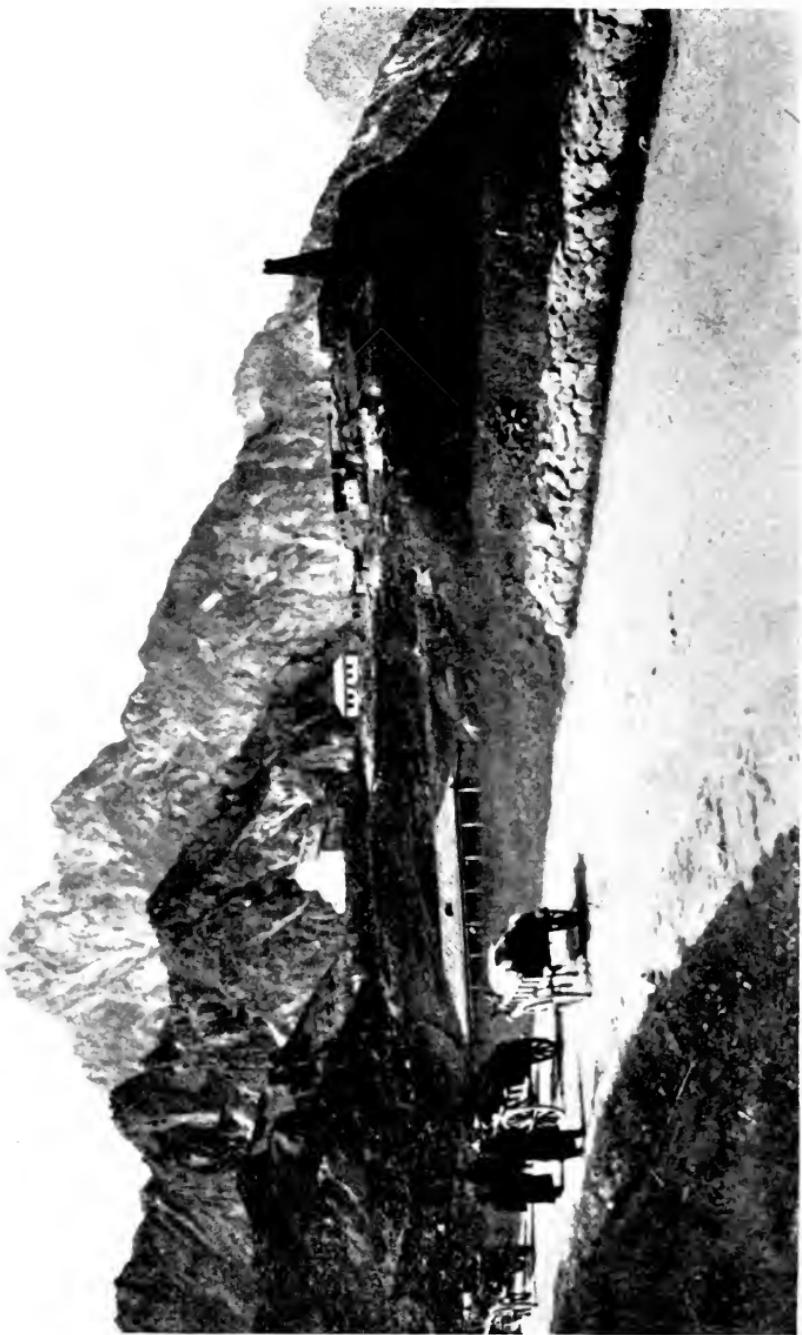
Through Russia in War-time

beating their foreheads till the body, enveloped in a 'bourka,' had been taken from the house and the dead man's gun laid by his side. Apparently the observance of such customs does not militate against a prevalence of superstitious beliefs, carried so far that a guide is reported to have exhibited the utmost dread before penetrating recesses in Mount Kasbèk sacred to biblical Abraham and the Virgin Mary. Among its snows are said to linger the patriarch's tent and, within it, the holy manger.

Making my way up an acclivity, I reached diminutive fields where natives, mostly women, wearing, under short skirts, long coloured calico trousers, were cutting hay. So I attained an advantageous position whence I could look, across the valley, at the great pinnacle of snow beautifully illumined by a sun still invisible. Photography was futile, for the light remains bad till late amid such high mountains. On the road a poor fellow, whose eyes were much inflamed, accosting me, said he had heard I was a doctor, and asked me to cure him, and I made a suggestion which may have alleviated his suffering.

Kasbèk posting station stands at an elevation of about 5,600 feet, so that I had risen more than 3,000 feet since leaving Vladikavkàz. The immediate route was along a flat valley which lies between mountain-sides a mile or so apart. Here the road closely accompanies the Terek, which though tolerably broad and deep, reveals a stony bed as clear as that of an English trout stream. On the right across the river, and high up the

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100



Kasbèk and Beyond

great rocky wall, hung a hamlet, having the highest tower I had yet seen, but not easily distinguishable because made of the reddish mountain stone. Next we met a small caravan. Upon the grass, and near half a dozen small wagons with arched canvas-covered roofs, drivers were beginning their day. They had passed the night in little bell-shaped tents, and, in the middle of their camp, one of their number sat upon a high stone that his head might be conveniently shaved by a friend. The outlook soon became a little less desolate, and as the road wound about and ascended, a mountain of magnificent craggy outline seemed to lie across our path. A foreground to this picture was formed by the little village of Sion, whose ancient tower stands almost as a landmark, while the basilica resembles outwardly the early Christian churches. Upon a horizontal pole beside it are hung its bells. At this point we overtook some carts driven by Ossetes, dressed, as usual, in white slouch hats and tight-fitting garments. The party interested me because we left Vladikavkàz at nearly the same time, and its rate of progress towards Tiflìs approximated to my own in the twenty-four hours —that is, about thirty miles. This seemed a fair rate for transport of merchandise in such a district, but the amount of traffic on the famous route was disappointing.

Gradually the scenery, although continuing grand, grew less wild until, after the descent to the post-house at Kòbi, the river was seen to

Through Russia in War-time

fork and the valley to broaden out. Altogether the view in the bright sunshine had grown less tremendous and awe-inspiring. The Stanzia is here sheltered by an interesting geological formation, a cliff of lava. Up to now the rocks coming under my notice had been chiefly granite, with in one place slate, but as Mount Kasbèk was originally a volcano, naturally enough columns of lava appeared where engineering operations had exposed the strata. Happily when I arrived, but little business took up the attention of the staff, consisting chiefly of two Georgian damsels, with an Ossetian lady friend, a visitor, and I was enabled to form an opinion of the feminine comeliness for which Georgia is renowned. The pretty Ossetian wore a red silk kerchief over the head in the manner customary with the women of her race; but the Georgians were more beautiful, possessing dark, languorous eyes and very regular features, charms which, with fine fresh complexions, accompanied a gentle and winning manner. It was my obvious duty to use the camera, and, after some little demur and exhibition of shyness, they let me have my way. Unwilling to lose time, I did not visit some troglodyte caves, to be reached by a difficult path in the neighbourhood. Regret for such an omission remains one of the penalties of imperfect travelling. But the solitary visitor must weigh various pros and cons, and a small command of a language may limit his movements.

Before my vehicle started on the next stage,



GEOGRAPHIC AND OSSETIAN MAIDENS.



Kasbèk and Beyond

which was toward the summit and the Station Gudàur, I had an opportunity of witnessing how busy a posting-house can be. Several carriages having arrived almost simultaneously on their way to Kasbèk, there occurred much harnessing, unharnessing, and redistribution of horses. Finally I was dispatched with four steeds abreast and two drivers, whose hats, of white sheepskin and black astrakhan respectively, offered a sufficient contrast. The ascent soon became severe, and disclosed wooden sheds and various forms of masonry, for protection at times against avalanches and falling boulders. We were now surrounded by not rocky precipices but lofty grass-covered slopes. Sheep browsed at great heights, and men, standing on giddy inclines, cut a crop of hay with their sickles. By the roadside was noticeable a large red incrustation, due to the existence of iron and lime in a trickling stream. Toward the summit of the pass, which attains an elevation of nearly 8,000 feet, patches of snow lay on the ground, and a little way to the left rose a stone cross, first erected by 'Queen Tamara,' doubtless a different person from the lady who threw her lovers from castle walls on a lonesome rock in Daryàl Gorge. When the two outside horses had been unhitched so as to follow with the wearer of the black 'shàpka,' his fellow 'yemshchìk' began the descent, absence of a brake being remedied by such strong roping of the shaft horses to the pole end as enabled them, if necessary, to hold back effectively. The

Through Russia in War-time

views had now become superlative. Behind and to the right, at a moderate distance, extended a chain of lofty mountains called 'The Seven Brothers,' and attaining a height of 14,000 feet. Though no glaciers or considerable white expanse dominated the picture, a sufficiency of snow, forming bright lines on vast and dark spaces, increased the very varied effects of the mountainous contours. On the more immediate right could be seen the bottom of a deep valley, and several thousand feet beneath us a rushing silvery stream, the Aràgva, which takes its origin in the tremendous range above mentioned, and proceeding on its course almost to Tiflis, prepares, as it were, a path for the traveller. In the afternoon I would make the wonderful descent to Mlèti, and so join the Aràgva.

The summit of the Krestòvy, or 'Cross' Pass, with its verdant pastures, having been left behind, Gudàur, the post station, was soon reached. One of the three highest inhabited places in the Caucasus, it shines forth perhaps the most lovely, and the outlook across the deep valley is truly majestic. Gudàur has a legend. Here the mountain spirit Goud, falling in love with Nina, a beautiful child of Ossety, and worshipping her, protected her father and made him prosper. But Nina had plighted her troth to Sasyko, a handsome youth skilful with his gun. Now, when winter came, Goud could not see Nina as often as before. So, tortured by jealousy, he sent an avalanche over the hut where the lovers sat



ASCENDING THE KRESTOVY PASS.



Kasbèk and Beyond

blissfully together. At first they laughed and were content, but as time wore on they became tormented by hunger. Alas ! during the madness of a fearful moment, Sasyko fastened his teeth in Nina's flesh ; then Goud laughed so loud that huge stones fell to the bottom of the valley, and have stayed there ever since.

Opposite the posting-house at Gudàur is a tiny shrine to St. George (and the Dragon), and while I gazed on it a diminutive urchin walked off with my staff, which was soon recovered by the postmaster, who described, as if amused, the enterprise of 'òtchen molodòy mältcheek' ('the very young boy'). A trifling incident, it served to remind me that in this remote and sparsely inhabited region I had met with very honest treatment, and been altogether unmolested by beggars. The Tsar's ukàz against intoxicants is not applied strictly in these southern districts, and at Gudàur I tasted the wine of Khakhètia. Neither dark nor light, it was palatable, though lacking edge. I must acknowledge that the word 'veenò,' uttered by an attendant youth, fell pleasantly upon the ear of one who, wishing to lunch, had tasted no fermented drink for two or three months. The concession may have been because the district is a wine-growing one ; or perhaps Transcaucasia enjoys a form of government less strict than that of Russia in general. While I was recalling that the Caucasus has been considered by geographers the natural division between Europe and Asia, my reflections were interrupted

Through Russia in War-time

by a strange sight. Up the ascent came slowly a cart piled high with faggots of wood. On them, and at full length, reclined a youth, while in front of two bullocks, and straining steadily, two women, by means of straps adjusted over the shoulders, aided the beasts in their task. For some reason or other my casual efforts to observe bird life in Russia had little success, but I noticed at Gudàur a pretty bird whose kind I had seen in several parts of the land. It is crested, rather smaller than a magpie, and coloured fawn and black. The 'yemshchìk' who drove me down the eighteen zigzags to Mlèti possessed a pleasant manner and handsome features, and was a superior specimen of humanity. Wearing on his head a well-formed black 'shàpka' and around his body a heavy cloak, which at a little distance might have suggested a Roman toga, he formed an engaging charioteer, ready to show me where, at a dangerous spot, an automobile with its single occupant had recently gone to destruction. Farther on, I noticed a remarkable formation of cliff. Beside the road and over a space of something like two hundred yards, reddish hexagonal lava columns rise perhaps fifty feet.

However thoroughly, owing to the frequent reversal of our direction, the view might change, it always contained elements of sublimity. Dark peaks, decked with snowy lines, towered to the north; across and beyond dizzy depths beneath us stood forth great, if less terrible, heights of



THE DESCENT TO GUDĀUR.



Kasbèk and Beyond

varying form ; but gradually and steadily the several thousand feet separating us from the Aràgva became fewer, till at last the river disclosed itself at the bottom of a chasm, beyond which stood, poised on the mountain-side, a hamlet with two square towers. A mile or two onwards, sentinels guarding a bridge permitted us to proceed, and then, passing a little church, the 'pereklàdnaya' drew up at the Stanzia of Mlèti, opposite the entrance to which a large notice courageously stated that here was a first-class restaurant. This station provided me with a gratuitous entertainment, as in the garden a tethered small brown bear now and again climbed the trunk of a tree. The creature, captured when a month old, as a Russian officer informed me, had now reached four times that age. The arrival of a tin containing crusts of bread floating in milk arrested angry growls, and prompted a dexterous use of the back of the paw as plate. I was soon relieved to find at my disposal a tolerably comfortable room, whose door could be securely fastened. 'Twas not amiss, as a party of travellers having arrived late, a loud-voiced lady, accompanied by a gentleman, made very determined efforts to obtain any available accommodation. After a good night's rest, wishing to approach some small hamlets with ancient towers, I retraced my steps along the route of the previous day. While so doing I was overtaken by a splendid figure : a mounted Cossack with his rifle slung across his back. Having

Through Russia in War-time

passed me, he doubtless descended by a mountain path and crossed the gorge of the Aràgva, for I saw him returning on the other side of the stream, and keeping me, as I thought, in view.

Returning to the station, I found that the word ‘seytchàs,’ signifying ‘immediately,’ has special elasticity in the minds of those attending to the wants of posting travellers. Two four-horsed land hooded phaetons had to be despatched first. Next drove off a heavily laden tarantàss, not lacking the inevitable bonnet-boxes. But when the last had been seen of its several occupants, including a uniformed student and a genial black-cassocked priest with hair caught up in a knot, who from his seat by the driver exhibited talent on a bugle, I once more entered my boat-shaped conveyance and proceeded. The road suddenly entered pretty, wooded scenes, with lateral gorges exhibiting forest or pasture, and conveying small affluents to the Aràgva. One now saw, not ordinary bullocks but black buffaloes with shaggy heads, compressed striated horns, and great humps on their backs. Fields of oats appeared, at first green, but golden as the day wore on, and the climate grew rapidly warmer. Hamlets, dotted about more numerously, but, as before, perched high, consisted of primitive houses, having heavy stones which weighted down flat roofs, whose rafters projected far forward, and so ensured grateful shade.

Thus in a very few hours the scenery and surroundings had completely changed. Instead

Kasbèk and Beyond

of either awe-inspiring, wild and frowning, or magnificent and snow-capped mountains, now a long valley bounded by lofty tree-covered hills delighted my eyes. The driver, if less agreeable than had been his predecessors, was shrewd. On a previous occasion, during the steep ascent to the Krestòvy Pass, I had allowed a soldier to obtain some sort of foothold behind the 'pereklàdnaya'; and now, against the yemshchìk's wish, I permitted, under the glamour of beautiful surroundings, a farmer-like individual, armed as usual with a kinjàal, to plead successfully for a lift. Unfortunately, he brought with him a sack containing very hard goods, which proved inconvenient on the narrow floor. Moreover, the general atmosphere, though not lawless, seemed less secure as the Georgian capital was approached, and suggested wariness.

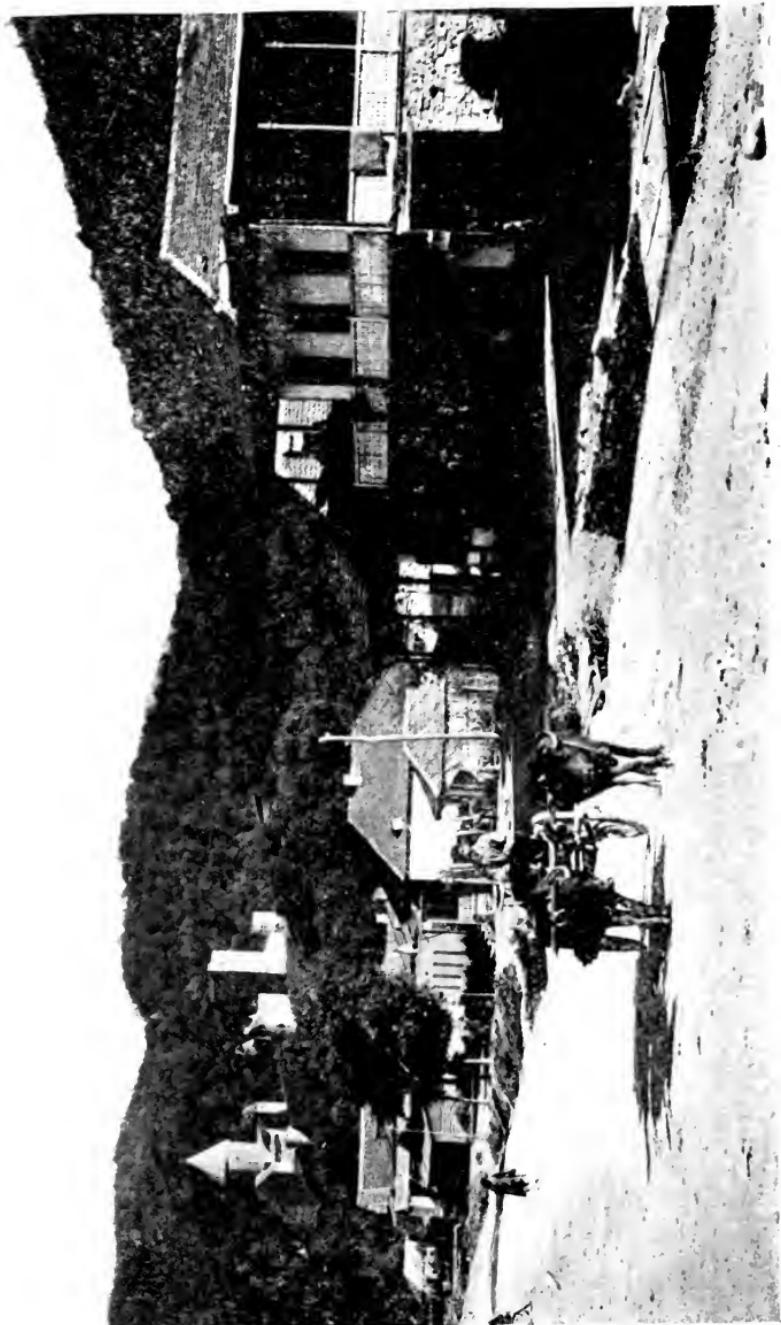
We drew up at Passanaur, a charming spot among wooded heights. Here the hills are so clothed with a homogeneous growth of trees that a velvety landscape soothes and enchantsthe sensitive traveller. Under overhanging branches the smooth road and the little Aràgva pursue side by side a quiet course. The village church of the Russian-Greek communion, having its row of bells slung on a bar within a grassy enclosure, almost adjoins the post-station, sitting opposite which, upon a bench under a large leafy tree in the middle of a broad road, I saw a tall priest draw near. A striking figure he seemed in his thin yellow soutane, tightly buttoned at the throat and

Through Russia in War-time

reaching to the ground, and his rather high hat of speckled straw. Speaking to a loiterer, he soon entered a long, one-storied inn. Evidently nothing happens in this small place. Yet seven or eight Russian soldiers, so fair that they contrasted remarkably with the natives, suddenly marched up with fixed bayonets, as if crossing an idyllic stage. But they disappeared, and all continued silent and dreamy in the midday heat. Nevertheless, a race of much interest, the Hefsours, live in the neighbouring mountains at a distance of ten or twenty miles. They number but a few thousand persons. Until about fifty years ago, and perhaps more recently, men of this tribe have worn on occasion a coat of mail and other armour over their garments. They are described as having no churches or priests, but revering St. George as a god of war. One of their customs is to put upon their clothes a mark which shall indicate where a wound has been received in one of their frequent duels. I understand that any one wishing to visit these people should take an escort of two or three soldiers.

I noticed very soon that the dress of the people changed, especially the men's headgear, which took on the form of the smallest possible round caps. Primitive carts having high wicker sides, and drawn by black buffaloes, whose curved horns are ribbed and flattened, dragged slowly along the road. Sometimes a man, woman, and child peered out, or the man walked by his team. Seven or eight idle horses in a field

36



ANANUR.

Kasbèk and Beyond

awaited the pleasure of their masters, who, armed as usual, were getting in the harvest near by. These men overtook me at the next village, Ananùr, after their day's work was completed, and I regretted lack of opportunity to inquire into the prevalent system of harvest labour. To this place from Passanaur had proved a two hours' drive of twenty-one versts, or about fifteen miles, downwards through mountains of moderate height. Since the driver returned almost at once, the small Caucasian horses are evidently hardy. As to the cost of this stage, it had been at the rate of only ten kopecks, or about twopence, per mile.

Situated at the junction of two wooded valleys, Ananùr, though insignificant of size, stands finely, while, in addition, its old Georgian church, possessing a many-sided pyramidal dome, rises picturesquely within the walls of a towered mediaeval fortress. To such stronghold, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Governor of Aràgva added two sacred buildings; but, after seizing the sister-in-law of a neighbouring magnate and selling her to the Persians, he paid a severe penalty, his castle succumbing to assault, and all its defenders being slain.

The men, who here were dark of countenance and often wore pointed beards well setting off aquiline features, showed a partiality for claret-coloured garments and, after more than the usual amount of indecision had occurred as to the driving arrangements, we set out for Dushèt,

Through Russia in War-time

with a 'yemshchik' thus brightly attired. For the second and last time a stranger sat beside me in the 'perekładnaya,' to wit a young green-capped tchinòvnik from Tiflís, affable and lenient toward my linguistic shortcomings. Yet other members of his party, including two ladies, showed themselves gay and friendly, and with reluctance I declined an invitation to pass the night at their stopping-place. Ill-equipped and ignorant of the country, I hesitated to abandon the well-tried, simple, and convenient inns connected with the posting system.

The road, having ascended over a mountain ridge, crossed uplands which afforded a fine view of a great salt lake. Then the two 'perekładnayas' raced downhill for several miles to Dushèt, but it was well beyond nightfall when I entered the stanzia kept by a black-bearded Armenian. At first his manner was rather bearish and hard, but it softened when I told him I had the honour of acquaintanceship with one of his learned compatriots in Northern Italy. The fare and accommodation were rough, and my chamber was remarkable for a garish rug which, filling up much of a wall, displayed the figure of a huge lion, a not unfitting symbol of the local mosquito. In the morning, feeling curious why a soldier patrolled the road opposite the Gostin-nitza, I inquired his business; he replied, "To warn motor-cars of the steep hill," but the traffic was infinitesimal. Departure was long delayed owing to the discovery that a horse must be shod;

Kasbèk and Beyond

however, at last I started for Mtzkhet, the ancient capital of Georgia. The driver, of the same race as my host, had a white cloth tied round his temples turban-wise, which covering seemed better than a fur 'shapka' in the heat of lower altitudes. As for the youthful ostler, he wore a tiny round cap and shoes turned up at the toe, in Eastern fashion. Through fertile, rolling country the peasants, upon this Sunday, were busy harvesting and loading or leading their buffalo-drawn wagons. A considerable descent brought us to a plain, on which appeared some wild and splendid gipsies. High upon a cart, drawn by buffaloes, rode their chief, a man past middle age, with gleaming eyes, a hooked nose, and an enormous grizzled and curved moustache. Unfortunately, owing to sudden cloudiness and rain, I could not attempt to take his picture. However, farther on I had better luck with a Zingari woman and her children, who walked on the road while several of her men-folk, lying at irregular intervals by its side, slumbered peacefully. With due vigour this very dark and handsome woman urged the claim of each of her numerous brood for a piece of silver, till the 'yemshchik' spoke to her angrily. The next stanzia, Tzilkàni, proved poverty-stricken in the extreme, and was the only one found by me in a filthy condition. That such a wretchedly bare and inhospitable place should be suffered to exist on a famous road is remarkable. Although travellers of fifty years ago have spoken in unmistakable

Through Russia in War-time

terms of drunken watchmen in charge, I saw no sign of alcoholic excess anywhere else. Outside the scene of desolation stood, with a blue ribbon round its neck, in the middle of the road a manifestation in the flesh of a child's toy lamb, as still as if, having once moved on wheels, it had now been abandoned. Its plumpness and the whiteness and curliness of its fleece were so amazing that, like several soldiers sitting on a bench, I could not but gaze at the little creature admiringly.

The way lay across the Karthalinian plain, and suddenly took a strange and deep dip. Long before Mtzkhet is reached, a remarkable view stands out of the ancient convent church of Dzhvaris-Zakdari upon a high hill. The former capital, Mtzkhet, is situated at the junction of the Aràgva and the Kurà, an important river which, rising in Armenia, passes through Tiflìs, and discharges after a long course eastward in the Caspian. How vast is the halo of antiquity surrounding Mtzkhet, mentioned by Ptolemy, Strabo, and Pliny, and claiming that the first ruler of the district was of the fifth generation from Noah! This kingdom of Karthly, several hundred years before Christ, covered the country between the Aràgva and the Black Sea. It would seem that, three centuries after Christ, Saint Nina won over Miriam, King of Karthly, to the new faith, and induced him to give up paganism and human sacrifices. Where the monarch built a sanctuary have stood successive churches,

MTZKHET.





Kasbèk and Beyond

and now rises a handsome cathedral surrounded by a high battlemented wall. The edifice contains the tomb of the last King of Georgia, who died in the year 1800, almost immediately after ceding his country to the Russian Tsar. Very sacred relics, and especially the Saviour's seamless garment, were long treasured in the cathedral. Mtzkhet, though now a miserable place, presents signs of activity, for the manufacture of coarse pottery is carried on in sheds lining the road, as visible to the approaching stranger. The great Roman, Pompey, having marched through Georgia, laid hands on the acropolis of the King of Karthly; for which, if no other reason, this is a historical neighbourhood. In turn, Tamerlane attacked Mtzkhet, though Tiflis had been the capital city of the Tsars of Georgia from about the year 500 A.D. In the town the convent church of Samtavro seemed as fine as the cathedral. It contains the remains of the first Christian King of Georgia.

As I drove up to the post-station the sight of a train full of passengers from Tiflis astonished me, till I remembered that this place is on the line of railway to Kutais and Batoum. Once again, and for the last stretch, four horses abreast drew me, at first over a stone bridge and at the foot of mountains, and then beside the Kurà. The parched country soon opened out into a plain. The 'yemshchik' a good fellow, discovering my desire to photograph passing cavaliers of fine appearance, jumped down once

Through Russia in War-time

or twice and, holding up his arms ineffectually, prayed the new-comers to stand. Three men on white horses, a lady riding straddle, and a foal made an effective group. But when two fully armed and fine horsemen drew near, I became discreet, reflecting that I carried several hundred pounds in English and Russian money; a proceeding due to doubt concerning my plans and difficulty in making ordinary financial arrangements during war-time in Petrograd. In due course we halted at a *Gostinnitza*, "the Inn of Tears," where persons leaving the capital for afar bid farewell to their friends. The obliging 'yemshchik' drank to my health in some wine, and I heard bystanders pronounce me evidently a Frenchman. Across the road were some tea-gardens and a considerable concourse of people. Soon we passed a comely lady travelling in a stylish equipage, and provided with an enormous band-box. She seemed amused at my appearance in such an unfashionable vehicle, and in truth I did not see any like it near Tiflis, entry to which is usually made by train from Mtzkheth. The 'yemshchik,' loyal to the last, incited his team, with the result that I was fearfully jolted and tossed about as we drove over the cobble-stones of the never-ending main thoroughfare. Thankfully, in the great heat, I descended at the doors of the Kavkàs Hotel, a headquarters for Georgians.



NEAR TIFLIS.

ALLEGATO

CHAPTER XIII

TIFLIS

THE picturesque position of Tiflis stirs to admiration the traveller arriving by the Georgian military road. Near him rushes the Kurà, through a deep cleft worn by its hurrying waters in the rocky ground, while, on either side, yellow or grey hills, attaining a height of two or three thousand feet, warn him that shelter of the city from winter winds is likely to be purchased during summer by a confined atmosphere and high temperature. Having passed a succession of houses for several miles in the valley, the new-comer entering the Golovinsky Prospekt finds himself in the Russian quarter. Here he sees fine buildings—for instance, the great Theatre, the Military Museum, the Garrison Cathedral, and the Viceroy's Palace; the neighbourhood being characterized by a leafy spaciousness which attains ideal development in the Alexander Park and Botanic Gardens. Continuing southward, past the theatre of the Georgian *noblesse*, the visitor reaches the Eriavanskaya Square, where the mixed assembly on the pavements tells him that, despite the propinquity of horse

Through Russia in War-time

trams, he is on the threshold of another world, namely the Georgian, Armenian, and Persian districts of Tiflis. If I may judge from a picture in a book of travels, the windows and doors in a Georgian gentleman's house open on to a wide gallery surrounding a central court, covered, formerly if not now, by an earthen dome, admitting air through a circular aperture in its summit. Except for absence of the dome, the arrangement was similar in my hotel. Otherwise the place might have been Russian, which is not astonishing, as the Georgians, inhabitants of the lower as opposed to the mountainous districts, are mostly a docile folk taking kindly to the Tsar's rule since the annexation of 1802. Tiflis, whose name refers to local hot springs, was a hamlet on the Kurà till the transference of the Government from Mtzkhet in the fifth century; but statuettes, found in graves, show that the people have worn the same kind of head-dress for two thousand years. The zenith of prosperity came in the reigns of Queen Tamàra and David, the "Restorer," in the twelfth century. Next, the country suffered at the merciless hands of Genghis Khan, and later, while undergoing long-continued strife, generally acknowledged the suzerainty of Persia. But of recent years Tiflis has made enormous strides, so that now this centre of trade movements, from north to south and east to west, counts three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, many of them engaged in sword and gun making, silver-work, the manu-



THE MAIDÂN, TIFLIS.

Tiflis

facture of carpets, the importation of raw silk, cotton, tobacco, and wine.

When making my way to the bazaars I felt that suddenly I had been translated to the fabled East. Strange people came into view—here a rough figure in his thick, all-enveloping ‘bòurka,’ or a Persian with bright red dye on cheeks and beard, and there two mullahs in green turbans and flowing robes of white. A tall, dark-skinned, aquiline-featured man, carrying for sale coloured calicoes over the arm, assented when I politely inquired of him if he was a Tatar. Many of the women wore the national Georgian head-dress, remarkable for its black velvet band across the forehead, while a kerchief, or long white veil, leaving the face uncovered, completes the effect. Persians of a labouring class could be recognized by their gracefully ribbed skull caps, and some of a better sort by high conical black hats, while, under a white or black shaggy, tall sheepskin head covering, mountaineers stepped forth vigorously, a few of them clad in the full-skirted caftàn with a row of cartridge-case ornaments on either breast. In the crowded Maidàn, or market square, picturesquely surrounded by deeply verandaed houses and by churches with many-sided pyramidal belfries on the slope above it, laden asses waited patiently, and buffalo cars rested, or slowly and jerkily advanced amid the cries of their drivers. Here men sold fruit, or porters carried skins of water on their backs or, evidently belonging to a gymnasium, although of

Through Russia in War-time

Oriental aspect, a youth in black rubashka and cap passed along, and one or two Moslem women holding a dark shawl or veil as high as their eyes, moved rapidly. Gendarmes, whose white tunics were crossed by straps over the breast, appeared capable, if necessary, of lifting a stick to obstreperous or disorderly loiterers ; but for myself, I was happy to stand about and cast my eyes in all directions, until a wild-looking Moslem appealed without effect to a gorodovòi, because I had pointed my camera toward a distant group. Any one turning southward could see that on the right, far above and beyond steeply placed dwellings, towered a lofty rock crowned by crumbling remains of a Persian fortress ; while, on the left, winding streets led downwards to a narrow bridge, standing on which he might watch the swirling Kurà far beneath. Much excitement arose when adventurers in a boat succeeded, after several failures, in crossing the impetuous river, overlooking which rises the former palace of the Georgian kings, now a prison with heavily barred windows. Non-European Tiflis is well provided with arcades, colonnades, and balconies. The various traders, such as butchers and fruit-sellers and furriers, are to be seen more or less grouped together in the open bazaar, while in the native quarters the streets are often lined with shops exhibiting goods like chased weapons or embroideries, or affording, in unwindowed interiors, room for coppersmiths or leather-workers to pursue their respective occupations. Here, cool,

Tiflis

dark recesses store for sale various Eastern carpets, and cellars contain large quantities of wine kept in inflated bullock-skins.

At hand, near the river, is a cathedral of stone, an edifice characteristically Georgian, founded in the fifth century, and containing, not only a picture of Saint Nina but her wooden cross, which, however, is not shown to visitors. It is said the Georgian Church originated from that of the Armenians, a truly remarkable people, very numerous in Tiflis, and originally inhabiting the highlands south of the Kurà; also that many Jews were deported by the Assyrians to Armenia, natives of which country are mentioned by Herodotus. This brown-haired race, with black and languid eyes, intelligent, shrewd, and keen in trade, has indeed many traits of the Hebrews, but surpasses them in agriculture. Near Erivan, and in sight of snowy Ararat, stands their famous ancient sacred convent of Echmiadzin. Here resides the Katholicos, or spiritual head of the Armenians, a dignitary deriving his power from possession of Gregory's right hand, the martyred saint who introduced Christianity to them in the fourth century. While the United Armenian Church exists in sympathy with that of Rome, the people pay reverence to the sacred fire on special occasions, as in the time of Zoroaster. The language, harsh of sound, but rich, belongs to the Aryan group.

An Armenian youth, after I had entered a church of his creed, politely acted as pilot through

Through Russia in War-time

the immediate neighbourhood. He seemed proud to do me such service, and even inquired my name. Next day I lingered again in the tortuous streets. No beggars importuned me for alms; and free to move about, I witnessed an altercation, culminating in an assault by a dark, slender man of distorted features and burning eyes, upon a tram conductor, who, preparing to defend himself, raised an enormous iron bar. However, a gendarme by a timely and vigorous interposition subdued the assailant's fury. On the floor of an arcade, which formed a covered bazaar, sat a young and handsome unveiled Tatar woman with her beautiful boy. They waited resignedly for a husband slow to arrive. How in the streets freedom obtained from the tyranny of fashionable tailors, expensive bootmakers, and stylish hatters! Nether limbs boasted very full breeches, or loose, or tight and wrinkled, trousers, and the feet were encased in anything from slippers to top-boots. Rude yet graceful counterparts of our surtouts, frock-coats, and jackets could be met on all sides, but in the matter of hats the sheepskin ruled the crowd with heavy sway, only a minority acknowledging allegiance to a tiny round cap. So noticing the various wayfarers, and occasionally a Persian of retreating chin and fat face, clean-shaven except as to the upper lip, I strolled, now to find myself opposite a turbaned and bearded person in a white wrapper, now to catch a glimpse of a slight and elegant skirted figure, concealed as to

Tiflis

head and shoulders by a shawl of purple silk, as she issued from a precipitous alley. Then, having gone past some imposing baths and up narrow, steep lanes, I found myself at the gateway of the famous Botanic Gardens. Most romantically situated amid rocky slopes, they approach perfection as nearly as imagination can conceive. Delightful shady walks minister to the needs of citizens who would escape the stifling air of the city; varieties of tropical trees and plants satisfy the eye; several bridges and cascades prove the designer's skill in making use of natural advantages. It was not easy to reach the lofty hillside overlooking Tiflis; but when at last, after displaying a little perseverance, I could look down on the great valley of habitations, and distinguish the winding river, and domes, and minarets, and scan the distant mountains, among which Kasbèk sometimes appears, I felt fully rewarded for my efforts. Having committed the classical error of demanding refreshment at a private house, I asked the whereabouts of a supposed café from a tall student, to learn it had passed out of existence, and be treated by him with much genial hospitality, since he brought me from his neighbouring home a glass of milk and a piece of bread upon a plate. This polite and friendly representative of the Russians related, as, in white tunic-like shirt and dark trousers, he stood with me on the summit of the craggy mass commanding the city, something of his work at the gymnasium.

Through Russia in War-time

The European quarters of Tiflis made no exacting demand upon my time, but when, with a pleasurable recollection of open-air entertainments in several towns, I innocently inquired of the park-keeper whether I might look forward to a concert, he made a caustic reply. There was sufficient music of another kind, he said, giving me a grim and first intimation of unfavourable military developments on his country's Western Front. Therefore, having strolled through the Maidan district once or twice again, and purchased a few curios, I set forth for Bakù. Before my phaeton reached the railway-station, its driver stopped his horse and, demanding how much I intended to give him, even audaciously threatened to invoke the aid of a gendarme, but, being sternly told to proceed, obeyed.

The phrases at my command included necessarily one asking when the train would start for its destination. But, at Tiflis railway-station, the moment of departure for Bakù was ruled by neither local time nor that of Petrograd. Trying to understand which mysterious circumstance, I experienced a strange helplessness, almost dejection, until, recalling that the concierge at the Hotel had spoken undecidedly on the subject, I determined to think no more about it, though making gloomy deductions concerning Oriental punctuality. But whatever vagueness may afflict, here and there, the hour of the train's departure, it is difficult to speak too highly of the civility and attentiveness of Russian railway officials.

Tiflis

Besides the underling, who brings you a tumbler of tea with lemon, there are a conductor and an over-conductor: the two latter wearing a distinctive and becoming costume of polished high-boots, enormously baggy trousers tucked into them, and, according to climate, a black or white full-skirted caftan. When the tickets are examined, a procession through the train occurs of this trinity, who arrive in ascending order of importance, so that the visitation is carried out with some little pomp. Once, at a remote spot, it seemed as if the whole strength of the staff might be called into action, since a powerful young peasant made a persistent effort to board the train against their will.

One of the delights of foreign travel consists in encountering strange or unusual people, intercourse with whom is all the freer because it almost certainly will not occur again. Soon after departure from Tiflis a new-comer interested me, and in a very short while we revealed our respective nationalities. "I am a German," said, to my astonishment, this fair-haired gentleman, deprecatingly and in the gentlest possible tones, with a curious and sad defiance. After a moment's hesitation, I replied in his language, and then it appeared he claimed descent from a Würtemberger who, with many another of his race, entered Russia and settled in Tiflis several generations ago with, I think, the motive of gaining religious tolerance. His business, now at a standstill, owing to difficulty in obtaining stock in trade,

Through Russia in War-time

consisted in supplying rifles to certain Caucasian highlanders, justly accredited with a tendency to deeds of violence ; but to his calling this young man, so mild that he even asked if I were not angry because of his race, had apparently succeeded from a forbear.

Next morning our route lay through a bare and sandy desert, subject to dazzling glare, and presenting, a few miles to the north, a low range of sandstone hills. Ere long we overtook two camels and their riders, making probably for the Tatar village that soon disclosed itself. Primitive, indeed, seemed at a distance the flat-roofed houses relieved here and there by a dome, and built of earth or mud, with rough walls pierced in lieu of windows by rude unglazed apertures. The place showed no sign of active life. Thus through the night I had removed to a region of Asiatic semi-civilization, almost of a sort suggesting to my ill-informed mind a province such as Turkestan ! Onwards sped the train in the brightest sunshine under a sky of perfect blue. At length some extraordinary structures came into sight on an elevated spot. Though having sides closed in with wood, they roughly resembled in shape miniature Eiffel towers, and constituted the head-gear of pumping machinery over naphtha wells. A dozen such edifices grouped together form a spectacle ; to come upon a forest of them astounds the beholder. Two pleasant Armenian gentlemen, now my fellow - passengers, exhibited travelling arrangements sufficiently complete for them to

Tiflis

enjoy a breakfast of sardines, caviare, and bread, supplemented with tea brought by the attendant. Meantime we continued past sun-scorched hills until at last, not without a little excitement, I saw what had hitherto been for me but a geographical expression. On our right lay the shore of the Caspian Sea, whose waves, here turbid, had left a line of salty scum marking their limit upon the beach.

CHAPTER XIV

BAKÙ

THE spaciousness and stone buildings of Bakù are impressive. Renowned for its harbour and naphtha industry, the town is situated on a treeless peninsula projecting far into the Caspian. As early as the tenth century an Arabian chronicler mentions this place, which was to come later under the dominion of Persia; but for a hundred years or more it has belonged to Russia. How strange that a spot long sacred to Persian fire worshippers, who not only built in it during the thirteenth century a temple, but afterwards the Monastery of the Ghebers, with cells around a belfry that had means for lighting the natural gas, should suddenly become of moment in human welfare! For the output of naphtha is enormous and constantly increasing. But Bakù, whose name is derived from a Persian word signifying "squally," in allusion to a characteristic of the weather on the coast, is the centre for great imports from Persia; raw cotton and silk, dried fruit, wine, timber, and other valuable products being brought hither by water.

Bakù

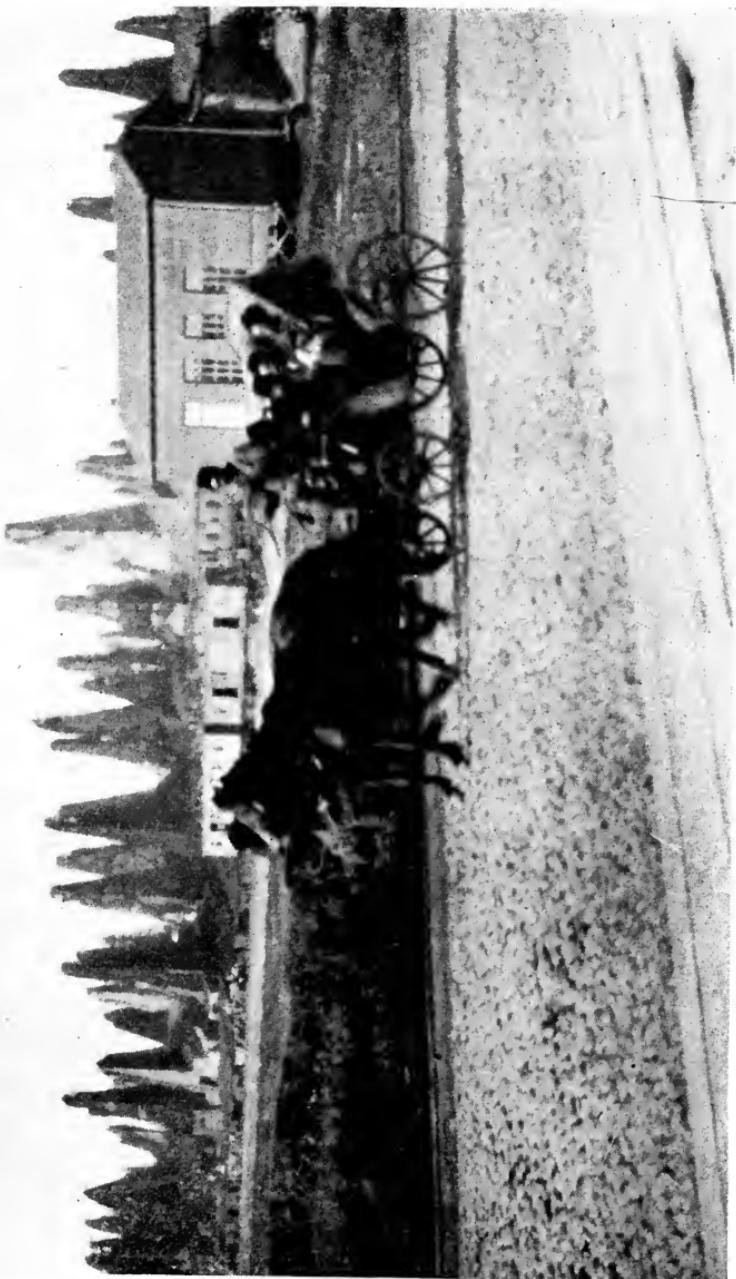
Travellers have little reason to complain of the hotels at Bakù, a providential circumstance, since dust storms, a condition of glare, and a high temperature make indoor comfort desirable. Leaving the large modern town and reaching an ancient neighbourhood, I succeeded, under the guidance of an affable tall-hatted Persian, who issued forth into a narrow lane, where haply I wandered, in ascending a high and strong tower, once part of a Khan's palace. Near by is a large mosque, entering which, to find half a dozen men engaged in prayer, each, as usual, far apart from his fellows, I gained a glimpse of white-veiled women at worship in a space railed off by a wooden screen. Then, having gazed on a lofty, solid edifice possessing a circular wall and called the Maiden's Tower, in commemoration of a Khan's daughter who threw herself from the summit because her father frowned upon her lover, I quitted this crowded Oriental district that abuts upon busy quays and a broad, shadeless esplanade, and made my way upward, through stone gateways of an old citadel to extensive bazaars. Here, indeed, a scene of activity displayed itself. Streets, by no means narrow, were given over to several forms of commerce, chief among which was fruit-selling. Tatars and low-class Persians hurried and jostled, while from carts took place much unloading of melons, grapes, and bright-coloured vegetables. Some veiled women moved about with but little Oriental languor in the motley throng, and two

Through Russia in War-time

or three magnificent Mullahs, attired in white or black robes and rolled turbans, walked with much dignity. Yet farther up the hill stands an imposing new Russian church, whose bright interior contrasts favourably with the dark space characteristic of the more hoary edifices sacred to the Orthodox religion.

A fine afternoon suggested a journey to Sabuntchi, in hope of gaining some little acquaintance with the naphtha industry. Besides many men, there were in the railway carriage two Moslem ladies, who held up white veils in such a way as to conceal the whole face except nose and eyes. Seeing whom, I recalled the greater strictness with which in Stamboul, a few years ago, the Mohammedan women were segregated in public conveyances, and the different method of supporting the veil in Cairo, where a little strip of cane descending between the eyes, gives attachment to the material hiding the features. The train soon reached the busy station, where, making some inquiries of a gendarme, I was astonished to hear him suddenly avow his opinion that the French and English were not doing well on the battlefield. Though his countrymen are outspoken, this man's utterance was exceptional, and did not tally with a far more favourable view generally held by persons whom I met. Here I found myself close to immense superstructures housing the machinery of the oil-wells. Tatars were numerous, and a swaying phaeton, crowded with a group of them in a hilarious condition,

SABUNTCHI, NEAR BAKŪ.



TO THE
AIRPORT

Bakù

drove rapidly past. Nothing seemed to bar access through black mud to the nearest works, and in a few minutes I stood within a fence, explaining to a gentleman, doubtless an overseer or manager, my wish to inspect. He assented with a nod and disappeared, so that I was free to enter and find the process strangely automatic, not a workman being visible. As seen in beams of sunlight, the atmosphere, over a space of a good many yards, glistened full of minute particles of reddish-yellow oil. The machinery seemed tolerably simple. By the aid of a revolving drum, a wire rope drew up, every few minutes, a long narrow steel piston or cylinder. This action caused a flow of crude naphtha, which, pouring down a flume to a vat, gleamed dark green, almost black, and was conducted by iron pipes to enormous purifying works at a distance of several miles.

Thither, to Black Town, I drove from Bakù, but arrived too late to survey the place properly, nevertheless in sufficient light to be much impressed by the immense size of the industry. Some time afterwards I gathered that the principle which governs the well-sinking is not drilling or boring with a sharp instrument, but tapping, succeeded by excavation with expansile claws. Having need to inquire at the Post Office and make arrangements for the forwarding of letters, I had nothing to complain of in the way of attention, being as a foreigner delighted to have made myself understood, if astonished

Through Russia in War-time

by the great dislocation in the postal service owing to the war. Yet some grumbling was audible among persons experiencing delay at the counters and, as I proceeded on my journey, instances frequently came to my notice of grievous waste of time. Thus, at railway and steam-boat ticket offices the virtue of patience was inculcated in a very thorough and practical manner.

CHAPTER XV

DERBÈNT

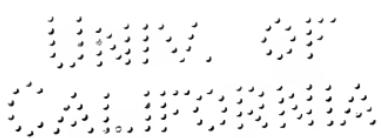
IT was a pleasant novelty to begin and complete a journey by daylight, that to the wild region of Daghestan. For a while little came in view but parched and yellow sandy desert with, here and there, on heights, outlying groups of naphtha wells. Then at a small roadside station my eyes encountered, and could scarcely turn from, a Mullah wearing a green turban and a beard dyed bright red. Absurdly enough the sight awoke in me astonishment that he mingled unconcernedly with, and caused no embarrassment to, the surrounding persons. Nevertheless I should have prized, at some entirely propitious and favourable moment, an opportunity to exchange a word with him, perhaps ask the time or how far it was to the next town. Nothing broke the monotony beyond the appearance, at a short distance, of first two Tatar-ridden camels, and later a herd, perhaps a hundred in number, of these animals grazing. In the compartment were two young women and the son of one of them, Alexander Michaelovitch, aged six weeks. The mother, careworn and haggard, complained that the climate of

Through Russia in War-time

Bakú did not suit her, for which reason she was seeking change of air at Petròvsk. Having gathered so much from her words, I ventured to continue the conversation. Presuming on medical knowledge and the greyness of my beard, I hinted that she should be less ready to satisfy the rapacious appetite of her magnificent offspring. Though not taken amiss, the suggestion was without result. Upon a cushion and under a gauze veil the child passed a beatific existence, slept profoundly when not in his mother's arms, and gave me an opportunity to ponder on the beauty of primal human qualities.

In weather which had become delightfully cool, we often ran close to the sea, and always in level country; but a few miles off, and to the west, rose continuously a chain of such lovely purple mountains as fascinate the artist in water colours, and seem of exaggerated hues when his work is inspected afterwards by others.

About midday a great change occurred in the vegetation, all desert characteristics having vanished. Some prosperous farms with ground under tillage, and clumps of oak and willow, took the place of sand and scrub and rank grass, and yet these features indicated rather a favoured oasis than a permanent change in the soil. Before saying farewell to the babe and his relatives, I had chanced upon some important information, namely that near Petròvsk lie several Tatar villages, and a wish to visit one of them arose within me. In the meantime destiny again





THE CITADEL, DERBENT.

Derbènt

arranged that I should halt at a "Grand" Hotel, this time at Derbènt, a town of especial interest, and situated commandingly where the mountains approach within two or three miles of the shore. The Russian quarter and a small harbour did not detain me long, since my attention was excited by a district ancient and Oriental. This extends right up to the mountains, and is surrounded on three sides by stone walls, from twenty to forty feet high and ten feet thick. Constructed in the sixth century by the great Persian monarch Chosroes, the fortified city formed a complete obstacle to southward aggressive movements on the part of the Khazars, a people with Turkish blood in their veins, who dwelt on the north-west shores of the Caspian. Since then Derbènt, meaning "barrier," has had many vicissitudes; thus the Arabs entered the place, which later was to form a residence for famous Haroun al Raschid. The Mongols captured it in 1220, but the Persians were generally the possessors till its acquisition by the Russian Empire a hundred years ago. Even at the present time the walls, with signs of frequent forts which had iron gates, extend westward stupendously for many miles across the mountains. A walk led me up a long and tolerably steep slope beside the citadel. Scores of men and red-cloaked Mohammedan women were passing to a cemetery on my left, having reached which, they stood still, forming little groups among grave-stones as much as eight feet high. But I

Through Russia in War-time

turned eventually toward a magnificent gateway which, with two pillars flanking a graceful arch, is still in good repair, and itself a proof of Derbent's importance at a mediaeval period. A man behind, who had seen me point my camera at the arch, uttered a disagreeable shout, so, without loitering, I continued into the walled city, past dark open shops, as of the cobbler or fruit - vendor, and through groups of idling Tatars and Persians. Several of the inhabitants carried a revolver, in addition to the usual dagger, but at a crossway a somewhat slovenly, if efficient, gendarme represented law and order. As the way chosen lay upward along irregular lanes and narrow passages, my glances were directed at dark doorways and dirty little courtyards, and windows seldom glazed of flat-roofed stone houses, until I emerged at another massive gateway, opposite the mountains, into which departed a sinuous road. This high, arched portal, built, as it is, of great stones without mortar, recalls the Etruscan city Volterra, but gives signs of injury during siege, doubtless by the Russians, early in the nineteenth century. Here I stood watching the departure of single wayfarers into a region notorious for insecurity of life ; while, from below, up a path on the northern side, where runs a ditch and the citadel walls are highest, came boys driving donkeys loaded with enormous metal water utensils shaped like an amphora. Proceeding down this path past a second unenclosed graveyard, visited, as had been

Derbent

the other, by men and red-hooded and cloaked women, I followed the defences and, coming to a third large gateway, outside which boys and asses engaged in water transport were congregated, I again entered the city, and hastened, for it was nearly night, to the inn. A fine melon, purchased at a stall for seven kopecks, supplemented the ‘plonka’ which a slipshod, diminutive, and shaggy but attentive waiter laid before me in the restaurant.

This city of thirty thousand inhabitants has, as I could see, cultivated areas around it. One account describes a growth of madder and tobacco, with a manufacture of ironware and rose-water; another mentions silk fabrics, weapons, and saffron; while yet a third speaks of vineyards, besides gardens and orchards producing figs, peaches, and pears. However, the signs of prosperity were scarcely commensurate with this list of activities.

At 5 o'clock next morning a wretched Tatar carried my luggage to the station, where I sat, able to observe a Red Cross train, even in this remote spot on the shore of the Caspian. Orderlies hurried up with dozens of long loaves, while broad step-ladders, lowered from the doors of the carriages, allowed a few poor fellows dressed in white, who, being less seriously wounded, had limpingly taken the air, to resume their places at the usual two-bell warning. A strange and sad scene in an ancient city of Chosroes and Haroun al Raschid, where western and eastern portions of the vast Russian Empire meet!

CHAPTER XVI

PETRÒVSK

AS my train departed northward the sun rose over a smooth Caspian. Looking in the direction of mysterious Asia, I saw upon the horizon leaden-coloured formless clouds; next a rosy light that, brightening, turned to an intense ruddy glow; last, a lone, majestic, golden sphere once more proudly asserting, over the edge of the waters, his glorious transcendence. Here and there, at a distance, appeared the windowless mud walls of a long Tatar dwelling, doubtless of the sort with a large opening in the roof. Meanwhile the sun-dried, steppe-like country continued narrow, for the brown or purple mountains were never far from the coast.

Inland, midway between Derbènt and Petròvsk, on a lofty plateau of the Eastern Caucasus, lies Guinib, the last refuge of Shamyl, the Mullah who, becoming spiritual head and ruler of the Lesghians, long maintained, during the middle of the nineteenth century, a successful guerilla warfare against Russia. Though attacked by an enormous army, this remarkable leader, owing to his skill and dominating personality, and the aid afforded

Petròvsk

by an almost roadless country abounding with woods and defiles, for thirty years bade defiance to his enemies. Twice he escaped almost miraculously when flight seemed impossible. His occasional cruelty is hinted at by the story that, finding communication had, against his warning, been opened up with a large number of captured Russian officers through a letter hidden in a loaf of bread, he had ten of them forthwith executed. At length, Prince Baryatinski, who directed the Tsar's forces, ordered simultaneous assaults at three points around Guinib, and his soldiers, facing the certainty of a fearful resistance, reached the stronghold by most difficult paths, and then overcame the last of Shamyl's brave and fanatical followers. Civilization had advanced: the famous Lesghian was granted a pension and required to reside at a central town in Russia.

Arrived at Petròvsk, a thriving if small post and railway town, whence I hoped to journey by steamer to Astrakhan, I deposited my effects temporarily in 'khranènie,' the exact meaning of which is 'safe keeping.' Then, under a blazing sun, I walked about, to come soon on a group of Persian labourers, in skull caps and single-breasted frock-coats, sitting idly on a parapet. How could I discover the road to any village? My command of Russian seemed unequal to the occasion. But it chanced that one of my boots needed a trifling repair, and, aided by the Russian tradesmen's custom of putting enormous sign-boards outside their places of business (to inform

Through Russia in War-time

the illiterate where their wants can be satisfied), I found a cobbler's residence. Passing through some wooden gates, I was shown by a peasant woman the proper door whereon to knock. Here in a tiny apartment, in one corner of which stood a bed, a young woman plied a sewing-machine, and a man mended shoes. "Potchinnèeht?" I asked, showing graphically what I wished. "Mòzhno," he replied, and gave me a tiny three-legged stool on which to sit. The cobbler was not happy in his undertaking, since before its conclusion he had broken three needles. Yet I remained content to watch him fumbling doggedly for new ones and continuing his task. Meanwhile, to account for paucity of words, I revealed my nationality, and explained that I was travelling for pleasure in his great country. Did he know of any Tatar villages in the neighbourhood? There were three such, he replied, indicating their locality by a hand movement so comprehensive as to be almost useless. After making further inquiries outside, I found myself striking inland toward a spur of the mountains which had excited my admiration since leaving Bakù. Cart-wheel tracks led over uneven ground that in the springtime perhaps boasted grass, and after a long walk past some vineyards, I arrived at a field where three men were flaying the carcass of a calf. A collection of houses at the foot of a steep hill was now near. Well aware that my approach was observed in the village, I soon got into touch with two little



LESGHIANS, PETROVSK.

Totalice p. 295.



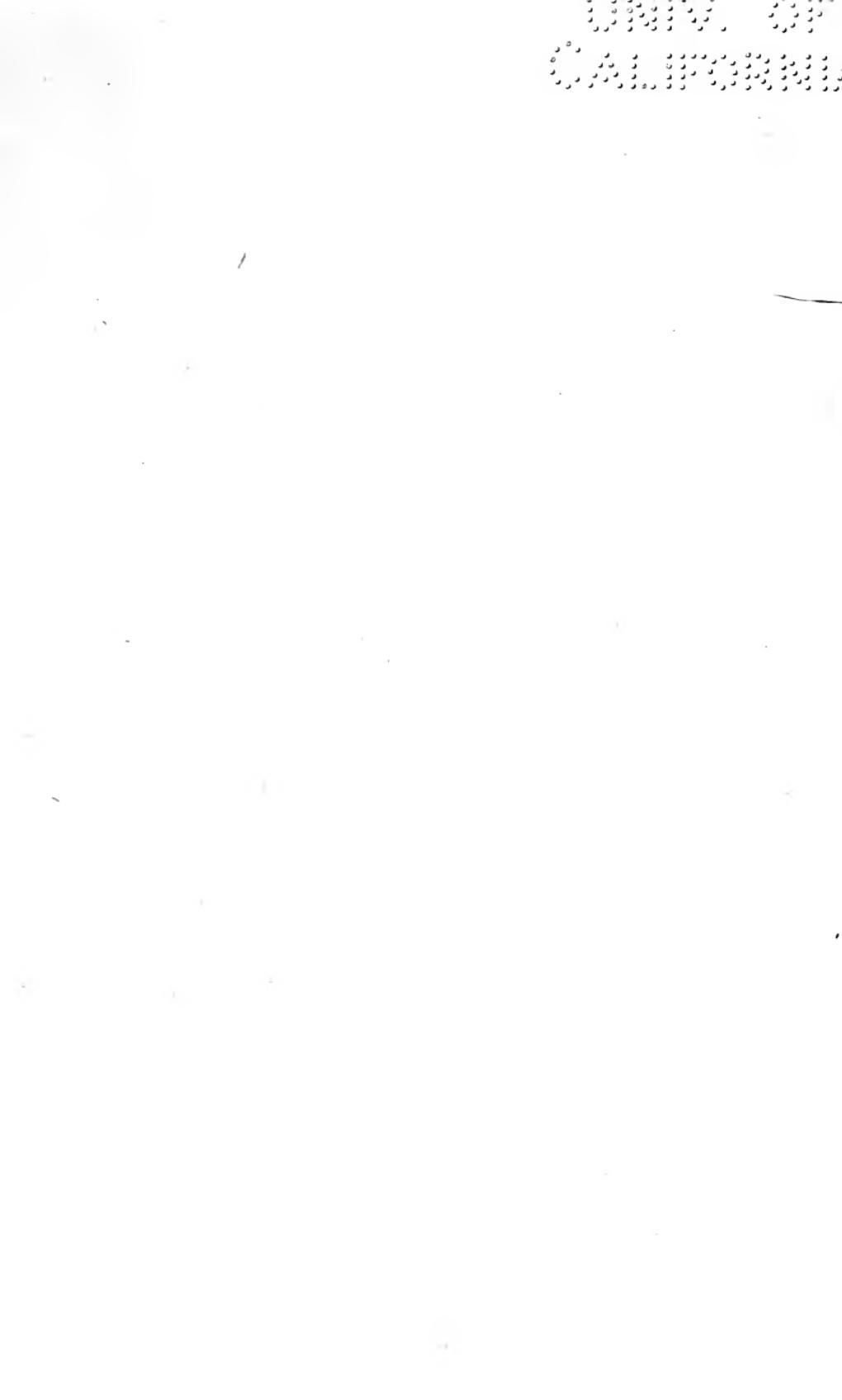
Petròvsk

maids in dresses so long as almost to reach the ground, my wish being to take their picture with a small pocket apparatus. Thereupon two men came up and, after a moment's doubt, evinced friendliness. Possibly the trifling reward bestowed on the children for their complaisance acted in my favour.

The men themselves offered to pose, and handled the camera with interest. They also showed me their kinjâals, which had their names engraved on the blade near the haft. Each weapon had cost, as they stated, twelve roubles. I asked if a café existed in the village, and would they partake of 'tchai'? Then the more important of the two invited me to his home. Walking past a few idlers in the street, we ascended some steps and, proceeding across a raised court, entered a small, one-storied house where everything was clean and attractive. There seemed to be two main rooms, and the front door led into the left-hand one, where in a far corner lay a mattress upon the ground. Burnished large copper stewpans and white metal ewers hung upon the side of the room facing the window, while a red carpet covered the middle of the floor and another hung on a wall, the opposite expanse being filled by suspended and neatly arranged pillows and spotless bedding. My host, who said he was twenty-three years of age, but, from the set of his features, might well have been thirty or more, placed a chair for me at one end of a small table near the door,

Through Russia in War-time

and himself took a seat at the other. Almost at once an elderly woman, who proved to be my new friend's mother, brought us some plates of sweetmeats, such as sherbet and almond rock, and undertook to make 'tchai'; but it was evident that the samovar was far from ready, for the time went by and no 'tchai' appeared. Meanwhile, often by the aid of my pocket dictionary, I was enabled to take part in a desultory conversation. This man was a farmer, who grew 'khlyèb' and 'vinogràd'—that is, wheat and vines. He spoke only Russian, but his brother knew the Tatar language, in which one of the books on the table was printed, the characters being Turkish. We amused ourselves by comparing the English and Russian words for the different portions of the face. I learnt that, during two or three months, snow lay here thick upon the ground. Was he married? No, but his troth had been plighted, and the young woman who came in and out of the room was his sister. He believed that, in England, girls marry later than in Daghestan, where seventeen is a usual age for taking the most important step in their career. Lastly, he claimed to be a Lesghian—that is, one of an important tribe of Caucasian mountaineers. Seated at the window, I could see two or three little girls playing outside, or childishly amused by peering at the strange visitor. But suddenly their attention seemed distracted. They scampered off below, and with companions were soon speaking to a hand-





LESGHIAN CHILDREN. PETROVSK.

To face p. 207.

Petròvsk

some officer on a bay horse. "Politsèskie ! potchemò ?" ("Why the police ?") I said to the Lesghian. "Nyè znàyoo" ("I do not know"), he replied. We sipped our tea and talked till came a rap at the door. Then entered a bearded superior-looking member of the gendarmerie, in peaked cap, blue breeches, and a grey tunic which had a silver strap on the left shoulder, and carrying a small leather pistol case at his side. Straightway he advanced and said, "Hand me your papers." Motioning that I should resume my seat, he took that of our host. The passport, fortunately, contained a fair likeness of its owner, who was ready enough to give all information desired. But the document did not suffice to allay suspicion. Consequently, a cross-examination ensued, amusing at first, and then fatiguing, while the room became gradually full of Lesghians, silently and eagerly attentive to the unwonted proceedings ; and even one or two of the women came in, which brought a smile to my host's face. Whatever might have been my answers, they would not have easily satisfied the doubts of an official unaccustomed to the ways of wandering Britons.

The expressions on which I relied were 'Pootesh-estbooyoo' ('I travel for pleasure'), and 'Vacàntsiya' ('holiday'), the significance of which latter word the officer did not seem to understand. Apparently, Archangel seemed to him a proper point of entry for a visitor to Russia in war-time. But other matters concerning my presence must be sifted,

Through Russia in War-time

and soon the title, Doctor of Medicine, became a godsend, since it afforded occasion for interrogation whether I was, or had been at any time, employed in an army. Very well, with what public body could I claim connection? Bethinking me that the name of my Alma Mater on the banks of the Cam might here be invoked, I found that the word University, with which I naturally coupled epithets expressive of antiquity, fame, and grandeur, carried some weight. Yet this polite gentleman was not easily convinced, and his pertinacity led me, hard pressed, to recall a certain work which I fondly imagined might bring me renown, so I boldly confessed to authorship, although the offspring of my ambition had but recently struggled forth, and I was ignorant of its fate. My interlocutor's features exhibited no marked change, but again he welcomed an opportunity for questioning. What was the subject of the book? Humbly I endeavoured to convey that I had found attraction in the mazes of history, aye, and that I had spoken well of the great Tsar and his people. A happy touch! Graciously replacing in my hand the document in which, under a representation of the lion and unicorn, Great Britain's Foreign Minister impressively requests "all those whom it may concern" to allow me to pass freely without let or hindrance, and to afford every assistance and protection of which I may stand in need, the officer proposed adjournment to the adjoining apartment. Leaving for a moment the

Petròvsk

other Lesghians behind, my host, the officer, and myself entered a room, like the first, whitewashed of wall. In the middle of the floor lay a small carpet, upon which were, carefully arranged in oblong form, five rows, each containing four dishes of sweetmeats and cakes. The variety and bright colour of these refreshments were astonishing. Several Tatars, bearded and of middle age or beyond it, entering almost immediately, shook hands with and greeted the representative of authority and myself. They then squatted down around the room, against the wall. We two, upon stools, sipped tea as did they, and all tasted some of the dishes. The topic of conversation most interesting to me was the 'Post' or fast of Ramadan, which had just begun. During four weeks meat could be consumed at night-time, but not by day. While the officer agreed with me that such abstention probably diminishes vigour, the grave and dignified Tatars responded to a question on the subject but briefly and were somewhat taciturn. The Russian asked whether I was visiting the next village, and at what hour I intended to continue my journey by vessel along the shores of the Caspian. Remark-
ing that I had not much time to waste, he took leave of me in a courteous and friendly manner and rode off slowly. Amid as I thought a feeling of relief, a buzz of, to me unintelligible, conversation broke out immediately, accompanied by a rapid moving to and fro. Quite ignorant whether the incident of this official examination

Through Russia in War-time

had in any way annoyed my host, I endeavoured to convey to him that I fully appreciated his hospitality and welcome. Then the Lesghians came out to bid me farewell and, standing above the steps, watched my departure.

CHAPTER XVII

ASTRAKHAN—THE KALMUCKS

AFTER some delay owing to vague arrangements at the Petròvsk steamship office, I embarked for Astrakhan, and, in a comfortable vessel, renewed my experience of a Russian dinner custom. The first-class passengers having partaken, seated, of such cold dishes as 'ikrà' (caviare), slices of veal or sausage, chicken, cucumber, and radishes, rose and crossed to another table in order to enjoy a regular meal with the usual courses. Among several persons on board speaking French fluently were a fine-looking and intelligent young Russian advocate and his pleasing wife, both of whom had travelled extensively. To him I put an early question concerning the status of children of the *noblesse*, though I had long known that in certain cases these remain in the same class as the father; indeed, I had seen a table of the Russian Tchin, or order of rank, according to which in the military and naval hierarchies, possessing, as they do, fourteen divisions, hereditary nobility belongs to the first six, and affects in such all the offspring and their descendants. So in the civil and Court

Through Russia in War-time

hierarchies, among those who enter the first four classes, nobility is handed down freely from the parent. To one who has breathed throughout his life the air of democracy, modified by primogeniture and limited aristocracy, verbal confirmation of a very different social system was satisfactory. My acquaintance, for his part, displayed much interest in England's method of recruiting her hereditary legislative chamber, and seemed greatly astonished to hear that the upper classes in England love country life. In Russia an opposite state of things prevails, owing probably to the great distances, the severe winter climate, and the paucity of neighbours. This gentleman seemed to be typical of his country's prosperous educated classes, inasmuch as, being lively and quick-witted, he highly appreciated gaiety and luxury. So the generally backward conditions around taxed his happiness as a traveller. Discussing education, he condemned, as exercising an untoward influence on future progress, the rigid and conventional methods enforced in the interests of the bureaucracy. I well knew the enormous importance in the State of that body, which, forming a solid phalanx, continues to be the real ruler, however favourable a portent the Duma's appearance on the scene may constitute. The landed proprietors have a vast direct influence in the popular chamber, and the moujik's force in national affairs is modified and controlled by a complex system of delegation.

The somewhat lower civilization in many parts

Astrakhan—the Kalmucks

of this mighty Empire presented a constantly attractive subject whereon a detached though hurried observer such as myself might reflect. It is clear that a traveller in Russia who does not bear in mind the comparatively recent emancipation of the peasantry from a grievous state of subjection fails to observe sound philosophical principles. Every nation's progress is limited by inexorable laws and, among the backward masses of a people even as amiable as the Russians, sudden, startling, and real changes can seldom occur, however enlightened and enthusiastic for reforms may be many of the upper classes. But how great a social and political amelioration has taken place appears from a record that, as late as the year 1800, a sale of serfs was advertised in a Moscow journal; while in 1859, two years before the liberation, as many as two hundred owners of men were adjudged by the State unfit to manage their properties. It is well to remember that the strong and patient *moujik* is a being whom centuries of harsh treatment inclined less to brave opposition than cunning methods of holding his own. The mass of powerful Russia's population is still afflicted by poverty. As to the spirit of freedom which has stirred our English Parliament for a space of six centuries, it only burst forth in the Imperial Duma ten years ago. Rightly enough, the intellectual and philanthropic are not easily daunted by obstacles; nevertheless statesmen know that the *moujik's* ignorance and suspicious temper

Through Russia in War-time

often make reforms difficult. With villages widely scattered and defective means of communication, the task in a severe climate of lifting up the people will be stupendous. But Church must unite with State in the noble work.

Conversation with a vivacious Frenchwoman accompanied by her husband confirmed my ideas as to the overwhelming vogue of card-playing in Russian society. Poor lady, how she bewailed the expensiveness of living in a large city on the borders of the Caspian, and the certainty that she would forfeit her desirable female friends unless she learnt to suffer losses at cards cheerfully! One of the institutions of Russian life is the 'fèldsher,' a person of some medical knowledge, who acts on occasion in outlying or secluded districts as a deputy doctor. Upon our vessel we possessed such an official in no less a person than the comely wife of the captain.

Transhipping into a boat having somewhat lighter draught, we ascended one of the many mouths of the Volga, whose low banks and flat shores presented an interesting sight, for at a few yards' distance from the water's edge were sprinkled here and there habitations of Kalmuck fishermen. Tall poles far apart below but projecting irregularly and approximating above, and so arranged there as to allow an outlet for smoke, formed the framework of graceful bell-shaped tents. The sides were of coarsely woven straw, and each dwelling possessed a small door. Our approach to Astrakhan continued monotonous until,

Astrakhan—the Kalmucks

at last, the sun shone on towers, domes, and cupolas, while the extensive Moorish-looking battlemented walls of the Kremlin, situated on a slope perhaps half a mile inland, stood forth in the centre of the city with fine effect. Steamers of considerable size, with smaller ones engaged in local traffic, lined the quays on the riverside, where, in the neighbourhood of wharves, a throng of people moved ceaselessly, among whom, though the greater part seemed Russians, were many Tatars and Kalmucks and Khirghiz. A sullen Tatar isvòshchik bore me, at dusk, in a dròschky, less diminutive than usual, to a mythical hotel recommended in a guide-book of recent date. Near at hand an establishment, which may have taken its place, offered fair bedrooms but no restaurant on the premises, a deficiency of little moment to one who had long ceased to be fastidious. My attention was soon aroused, in a street on the riverside, by certain coarse and cruel-looking men who sat with backs against the wall of a house, their legs being stretched forward upon the pavement. The ruddy and dark colouring of their large, flat, beardless faces impressed me more than anything else about them. The nose of each was straight and small, its line upward forming a concavity below the forehead, while savage eyes looked through slit-like apertures between large and high cheekbones. These men were Kalmucks.

In Astrakhan one treads soil which has witnessed stirring scenes. A little higher up the

Through Russia in War-time

river, as early as the twelfth century, stood a Tatar city, Tsitrakhan, whither came Timur in the fourteenth century to deal out destruction. Then, as capital of a Tatar kingdom, the present city arose, and continued till, by right of conquest, Ivàn the Terrible grew able to call himself Tsar of Astrakhan as well as of Russia. Turks who sought to oust the new-comers failed of their purpose. Next, in the fearful confusion and strife which preceded the accession to power of the Romanovs, the Cossacks joined the party of the false Dmitri and aided his wife to capture the town. Yet their success was of brief duration, while a fresh attack by the Tatars failed completely. In the reign of the mild Alexis the Cossacks rebelled once more, and this time under Stenka Razin, a picturesque leader such as Russia has produced often.

The career of this turbulent adventurer tells us something of seventeenth-century conditions. Heading dispossessed and starving Cossacks, he created terror by acts of brigandage on the Volga. Stenka, the embodiment of force and treachery, journeyed down the river with thirty-four ships to slay and devastate, for, although pious, he leaned to acts of cruelty. Spurning the Tsar's offer of pardon, and overcoming an army sent against him from Astrakhan, he cried havoc on the Persian shores of the Caspian, destroyed towns and massacred inhabitants, even annihilated the Shah's fleet. Then, returning to Astrakhan as a generous and mighty conqueror,

Astrakhan—the Kalmucks

ever lavishly ostentatious, the freebooter captivated the imagination of the common folk. One who saw describes a moment of this man's life. Stenka, the magnificent, toying with his mistress, a Persian princess, was lazily wafted in his barge down the Volga. Suddenly, impulsive as a madman, he lifted the unfortunate woman in the air, and, apostrophizing the great river, cast her into the current. But his masterfulness fascinated, dominated a population that possessed a considerable liking for a robber's calling. Submitting to the Tsar, Razin showed little regard for the Imperial behests ; nay, before long he attacked the town Tsaritzin, and committed enormities to the south of Moscow. Next, turning round, he marched with his Cossacks against Astrakhan, to find it protected but by the wavering Stryeltzi, or musketeers, assisted at first by an Irish captain and an English colonel. The assailants, bursting through the defences, finished the day with wholesale slaughter and terrible pillage. Weeks of bloody orgies followed, while Stenka constituted himself head of a republic. Meantime his emissaries, arousing revolt in an enormous district, stirred the oppressed moujiks to war against all in authority. But if Razin and his lieutenant Osipov were ruthless, the boyars representing the Government could be no less ferocious ; and soon an efficient and merciless general took command of the Tsar's forces, whereupon the rebels succumbed. Unable to elude pursuit, their leader was taken to Moscow,

Through Russia in War-time

where he suffered bravely extremes of torture, eventually being quartered alive. Russia, like France and Germany, has had her Jacqueries, not only the restless and adventurous Cossacks resisting authority, but the wretched serfs, when incited, opposing their lords. Thus the defenceless *moujik*, whose liberty became imperilled under Tatar domination and was destroyed by Borís Godunòv, could strike manfully, if ineffectually, in the centuries which preceded the day of emancipation.

It happened that a fellow-traveller, in the north of Russia, had mentioned to me a Kalmuck settlement in the neighbourhood of Astrakhan. Recalling his directions, I entered a tram, the conductor of which was a girl in uniform, and went forth to Bálda. Then, proceeding on foot, past some large timber-yards, I asked, at an open stall by the wayside, if any Kalmucks resided near at hand. The man standing behind the counter seemed afraid to answer, but a woman customer, when she heard of my English nationality, which caused her to ponder greatly, nodded her head and pointed half-heartedly in a certain direction. Soon I was glad to see on the outskirts of the steppe several round tents and their occupants. Raising my camera, I drew near, but a chorus of shrill cries warned me that in some mode or other my behaviour caused disapproval. Nevertheless, I did not quite desist. Again expostulation and a fluttering movement occurred among women and children. Finally a

KALMUCKS, BALDA.





Astrakhan—the Kalmucks

Kalmuck mother of rather more than middle age approached, and linking her arm in mine, led me to the space between five or six tents, where, among three women, an old man, a boy, and some small children, I was given amidst chatter to understand that I could indulge my wish. The khîbitkas were circular and measured perhaps twelve feet across, their walls being formed of straw mats, whereof one could be raised or lowered over a doorway. No vent existed in the convex roof, nor did any seem very necessary, cooking being performed outside at a little oven made of clay and bricks. The man, whose face had a mild and genial expression, was undemonstrative, yet proudly showed me his bride, a pale-faced woman no longer young, veiled and dressed in white according to the custom of the newly married. The chief of the party was certainly the old mother. She led me within an object of evident pride, a tent furnished with carpets and containing two samovars, some brass-bound boxes and a few cups and saucers. The little settlement was delightfully neat and clean and, as my visit brought me much pleasure, I took care to express myself to that effect, and gave in turn satisfaction. Plenty of hand-shaking occurred between us, as well as the distribution on my part of some trifling gifts, yet curiously, when I presented the mother with a rouble, she took out her purse and, in a businesslike way, handed back half the amount. Such a unique experience led me to conclude

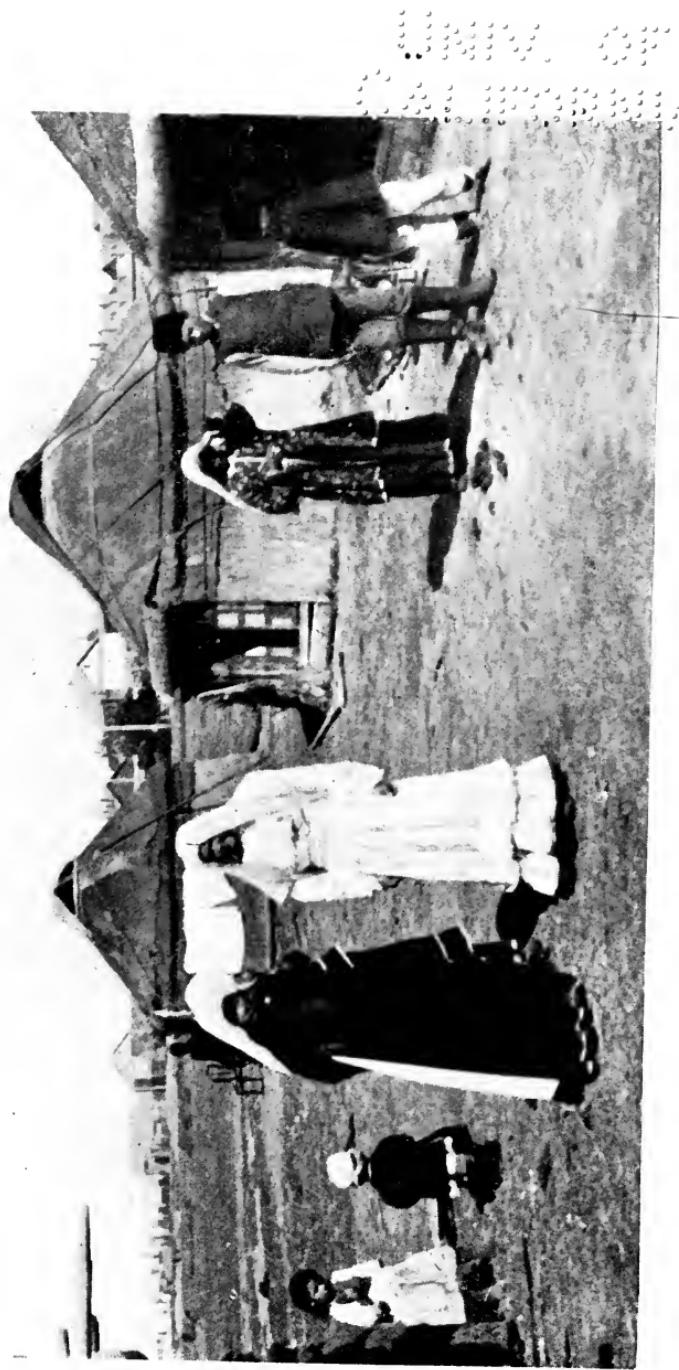
Through Russia in War-time

that the camp was under official supervision. These people had fissure-like eye apertures and flat, yellowish faces, but were less dark of skin than some members of their race whom I visited later.

Who are the Kalmucks? What of their general stock? Perhaps as Nature's reproach to the peace-loving Chinese, on the confines of their territory a race arose so energetic and warlike as to set its mark for ever on the history of mankind. Speaking a simple dialect of the Turkic language, the Mongols (that is, the "brave" or "bold") were first heard of to the north of the desert of Gobi. They formed doubtless a branch of the race inhabiting the vast stretch of land between the Uràl and Altai Mountains, and had already existed several hundreds of years before, in the thirteenth century, their ruler, Genghis Khan, astonished the world. Probably no other conqueror has ever quite equalled this chief's peculiar exploits. Whether climatic conditions awoke his dissatisfaction with the old pasture-lands, or some strange and mighty ambition stirred his soul, he took a most astounding journey. Leaving his capital, Karakorum, whose ruins still exist, he moved constantly from the East, and first overcame, then induced to accompany him, the Tatars of Central and Western Asia. Covering incredible distances, the great horde crossed eventually the Uràl, the Volga, the Don, the Dneiper, and other rivers: thoroughly penetrated Russia. A Chinese writer of the

KALMUCK CAMP, BALDA.

To face p. 220





Astrakhan—the Kalmucks

period describes the ruthlessness and military skill of the invaders. After telling that, though their leader, a man of unusual height, wore a long beard, while the Mongols usually had but scanty beards and no upper eyelashes, and were characterized by wide, flat, square faces and prominent cheekbones, he explains that they were fighters by instinct, being much given to hunting.

As they marched, having subdued the smaller places, they would often drive the inhabitants before them, for use in attacking a large town. The prisoners were set to severe toil, such as digging trenches, and killed when they became exhausted. Little mercy was shown to any one. It naturally occurs to ask how the horde subsisted so far from their base. The answer is that its mobility depended on absence of provision wagons and baggage, for the marauding host ate nothing but meat, which was provided by the sheep and cattle which followed it. I suppose, like some of their modern representatives, the Khirghiz, they drank mare's milk.

Though Genghis Khan drew off his vast army and returned to Karakorum, his genius descended to his sons and grandsons. They triumphed over China, Central Asia, and Persia, but, as a far more important event, Baty Khan, in the year 1239, newly advanced against Russia, and with permanent results. Silesia, Poland, and Germany barred further progress, but Hungary was overrun, and princes ruling the cities of Muscovy acknowledged the domination of a Tatar

Through Russia in War-time

Khan on the banks of the Volga. Indeed, the whole land, not excluding the south, long and severely felt the heel of the conqueror. Despite that Grand Princes ruling the cities of Muscovy gradually developed into a line of Tsars, the Tartars retained Kazan as their headquarters till 1552, and did not know final defeat before the moment of battle under the walls of the Muscovite capital at the end of the sixteenth century. As to the Krim Tatars, they continued able, through raids on the outer regions of Poland and Russia, to carry off women and sell them to Turks at Kaffa (the present Theodosia in the Crimea), till the peninsula was conquered in the era of Catherine the Great. There is a town marked on the map as Kipchak in the steppe, far to the east of the Uràl Mountains, and long before the invasions of Genghis Khan and of the Golden Horde under Baty Khan, Tatars (in other words, Moslems speaking a Turkic dialect), left that place and settled between the Uràl River and the Don.

But a later and more extraordinary irruption is that of the Kalmucks in the seventeenth century. These people, Buddhists of pure Mongol blood, and physically much akin to the Chinese, but speaking a crude Turkish, suddenly travelled from the Far East and settled upon steppes round about Astrakhan. However, being ill-treated in the time of the Empress Catherine, they as unexpectedly returned to the far spot whence they came, though leaving behind a good many thousands, some of whom, armed with bows and

Astrakhan—the Kalmucks

arrows, even supported the Russians in pursuit of Napoleon in 1812.

After visiting Bàlda, I made my way to Astrakhan without difficulty, and thence in the afternoon, on a river steamboat, journeyed for some six miles up the Volga to Kalmücki-Bazar, there coming upon another and far larger collection of this Mongol race. Compared with Chinese, they seemed of clumsier build, and also darker and more fleshy of face. Between the right bank of the river and a flat, sandy desert steppe, lie khibítkas, and near at hand some primitive wooden houses. For in winter these nomads relinquish their tents in favour of more solid dwellings. The women, each wearing a little round cap and long plaits of hair hanging down on either side of the chest, were clothed in simple blue gowns. They smoked, like the men, a chibòuk, or long pipe with a wooden stem and small terra-cotta bowl, and would on no account agree to be photographed—indeed, ran off screaming at the suggestion of such a liberty. Altogether they appeared wilder and less sophisticated than those at Bàlda, probably because the settlement is more isolated. Seated on a little bench, outside the tiniest imaginable general store, and eating a fine melon, which had been obtained at the cost of a few kopecks, I watched three women build a khibítka. First they erected a framework of light and rounded poles placed either in a vertical position, or crossways, or so inclined as to fit in a central hoop overhead. When the

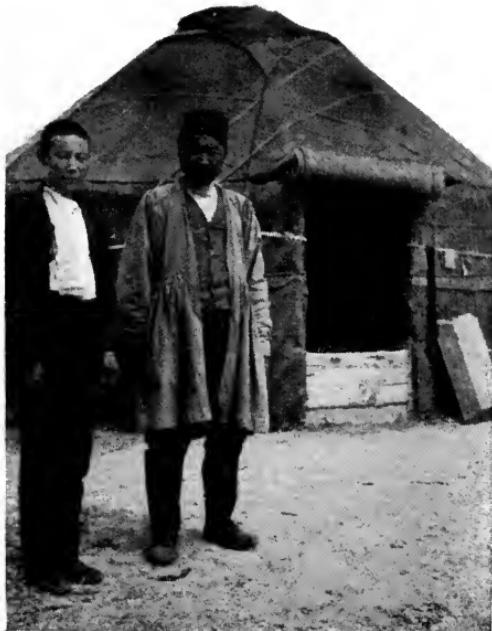
Through Russia in War-time

skeleton was complete, mats were hung in order to clothe the sides, and lastly, some skins adjusted to form a roof were made rapidly secure by a few encircling ropes. The whole work consumed an hour. Chancing to look round, I saw, almost upon me, a camel, which, seeming to spring out of nowhere, passed silently and swiftly and disappeared as mysteriously as it came. The rider, a woman with her head hooded, sat in a small load of hay. Others of her sex spent their time cooking at clay ovens in front of the khibitkas, or carried infants in and near their homes.

Returning to Astrakhan, I received an unsatisfactory and confused answer from the hotel porter concerning the passport without which I could not proceed on my way. But it happened that three genial Englishmen from Bakù had courteously called upon me, and I had the pleasure of hearing them successively speak fluent Russian on my behalf, though without effect. Consequently I had time to pay a second visit to Kalmücki-Bazar. On this occasion I watched the life of the place in one or two streets lined with weatherboard cabins, which stood bravely though out of the perpendicular. On a narrow veranda a Kalmuck contentedly smoked his chibouk, while, near by, another conducted a small butcher's business, and a third kept a general store. Some women and girls sat gossiping upon the wooden steps, but the small boys showed themselves no more above teasing and striking each other than they are



KALMUCK GIRLS AT KALMÜCKI-BAZAR.



KALMUCKS AT KALMÜCKI-BAZAR.



Astrakhan—the Kalmucks

in other parts of the world. Ere long I was approached and greeted by a friendly and highly respectable-looking Kalmuck, who, I believe, was the 'preèstav' or inspector. Though his words did not at once convey ideas to my mind, his gestures indicated that he would willingly accompany me; and soon, in return for the general interest I displayed in the settlement, he asked whether I came from London. To collect his youthful acquaintance so that I might use my camera gave him such inexhaustible delight that at last I felt constrained firmly and, as I hope, gracefully, to resume my independence. Trying to understand the place's topography, I found on the Volga's bank perhaps a dozen 'khibítkas' irregularly disposed, while two streets of small one-storied wooden houses, each containing one or two rooms, ran up from the water. Scattered among and between these habitations stand forty or fifty additional 'khibítkas.' As to outward traits, the little boys, idling or at 'play, seemed sharp and not ill-looking, despite their narrow and often obliquely set eyes; but two girls about ten years old, and sitting against the wall of a tent, suffered from an ugliness to which an extremely sunken nose set a climax. Men and women had hard, flat, expressionless faces. Nevertheless, the 'preèstav' was cheery and bright, and nobody showed himself in the least uncivil. Making a small purchase in a store, I asked a Kalmuck there whether he was a Buddhist, and received an affirmative reply, though another

Through Russia in War-time

Kalmuck, a fine, tall fisherman, standing by, claimed to be a Moslem. Of great interest to any one visiting this village is the Lama-Buddhist temple, a wooden building of several stories painted white and green. Unfortunately, I did not enter it, but a traveller,¹ writing a generation and a half ago, describes the interior carefully. Each of seven gods, on a table covered with a clean white cloth, had its little umbrella, its little silver pot of silver lotus-flowers, its little cup of beans, and its little cup of tea, while overhead hung a beautiful embroidered canopy. Around the walls appeared pictures of different gods, such as War, Medicine, Wealth, etc., some of which were hideous, some smiling, and all allegorically painted as sitting upon the emblematic lotus-flower. A prayer-wheel, in the shape of a wooden drum, perhaps a foot in diameter and as long, stood on either side of the door. It revolved vertically under the action of a leather strap and a crank, and seemed well-worn from frequent use. Prayers were carved upon it, and each spin of the wheel said four prayers.

In the course of two or three 'days' sojourn I had become roughly acquainted with a few features of Astrakhan life. The huge beluga, one of the varieties of sturgeon, the roe of which is known as caviare, was for sale on barrows at the water's edge and, near the market-place, tanks exist in the Volga for the live fish.

¹ Sir A. Cunynghame.

LAMA-BUDDHIST TEMPLE. KALMÜCKI-BAZAR.





Astrakhan—the Kalmucks

But this busy city, full of many races of men, from Russians to Persians, has much general trade. It imports grain and timber, and sends away petroleum, fish, salt, and wool. Wishing to enter the Kremlin, which has a well-preserved and long battlemented wall, I passed by the eastern gate a large rag market. Within the gate stands, with white walls and five green cupolas, Astrakhan's most prominent building, the Oospénsky Cathedral, whose exterior is, like that of many other Russian churches, more beautiful from afar than at a short distance. But admittance was impossible on account of extensive repairs in progress, so I could neither behold the lofty, many-pictured ikonostàs, nor inspect the sacristy famous for its collection of vestments and mitres. Shops line several considerable streets in the centre of the city, but, walking about and regarding this or that, I became aware of the scrutiny of the numerous gendarmes, which seemed less remarkable when I learned that there were in the place some thousands of Austrian prisoners, one or two of whom, in blue-grey uniform, sat in a listless attitude on benches in the municipal gardens.

At my hotel I found a message from the authorities to the effect that if I called at the head Police Office a little while before departure, my papers would be handed me; and as one of my new English friends was in a like position, he kindly accompanied me and, asserting himself, was of assistance in the matter. At

Through Russia in War-time

first nobody paid any attention to us, and we stood vaguely in one room or another, where clerks sat at small tables. However, with comparatively little delay, the passports were forthcoming.

CHAPTER XVIII

A JOURNEY TO URÀLSK—THE KHIRGHÌZ

HEARING of Khirghìz at Uràlsk, a town outside the limits of Russia proper, I determined to go there, not imagining the journey would take nearly forty-eight hours. A polite youth in a dark cloth uniform, who sat opposite, said he had been studying English at a gymnasium in Moscow, but it became evident his knowledge had not yet advanced far. The outlook was on to flat steppe covered by coarse grass, and rarely adorned by a farm. Dullness and dreariness prevailed, and two or three camels grazing near the railway came as a relief to the desolate scene. At Urbach, a junction, Destiny willed me to wait fourteen hours, even till midnight, and here, though a ‘booffyèt’ afforded such sustenance as allayed fear of starvation, and provided an inner refuge away from the peasants who lay thick upon the floor of the waiting-hall, I had to search for means of passing the time. Under a cloudless sky, and with the air at a pleasant temperature, I set out on a walk. At first not a soul was visible in the long and unpaved grass-growing street which appeared to

Through Russia in War-time

constitute the place. On either side stood at intervals yellow, plaster-walled one-storied cottages of the design and architectural merit usually approved by a young child. Then at a well situated within the boundaries of the street a woman in a sunbonnet spoke with a man, tidier, slighter, and less hirsute than the ordinary *moujik*, while he languidly worked a windlass to lower and raise a bucket. Soon I came on a pile of square-shaped rooty clods of earth which had been dug out of a neighbouring shallow hole and stacked on the slant to harden in the sun's rays, and so become fit for building purposes. Farther still, on the vast plain of the steppe, appeared two men riding and driving camels. A mysterious circumstance! What were these denizens of the desert doing in an agricultural district of Russia? I hurried to come up with them, but without success, for every now and then they went off at a jog-trot along tracks in the stubble. Having thus drawn away from Urbach, and seeing several small villages against the horizon line, I selected a direction in which to proceed. On my way into the Unknown, I recalled the warnings of friends as to the danger of walking among peasants monumentally ignorant and suspicious; and, while my little adventure exhilarated, the old trouble of linguistic deficiency oppressed me. What a surprise ensued! In a little while a tall, thin individual, smoking a long pipe terminating in a porcelain bowl, approached. To my astonish-

A Journey to Uralsk—the Khirghiz

ment he shook hands, and asked whether I was going to Marienthal. As it was easier to acknowledge such a suggested purpose for my peregrinations than to reveal aimlessness of quest, I let him think he was right, said it was a fine day, and, having passed four camels grazing in a little hollow, in a few minutes entered the village. It was formed of primitive wooden plastered dwellings, irregularly constituting one or two wide streets. Near a wooden church with a spire, a clean-shaven man sat on a step and dandled his child. Curiously enough he began to speak good German, in which language, after a moment's doubt, I answered him, to find myself transported for the time being to Würtemberg. For this man, as to appearance and manner, was of the type found a generation ago in remote parts of the 'Fatherland.' We talked of his little lame daughter, of the calf which through some bars poked its moist muzzle, and of the neighbouring Roman Catholic Church. It seemed the place of worship at the railway village was Lutheran; so that here descendants of foreign settlers retain their separate creeds. Finally, invited to the home, in a small but exquisitely clean little room with whitewashed walls, I accepted, at a table covered by a cloth, hospitality offered with much kindness. Tea and eggs and bread refreshed me, while I learnt something as to the relative merit of camel and horse in farmwork. The cost being the same—twenty pounds—the camel is

Through Russia in War-time

twice or thrice as strong as the horse, and can exist on much coarser fare. My host explained that while Russian is taught in the school, the language of his ancestors is handed on to the children by their parents. Spontaneously he avowed himself happy, and altogether contented with his simple peasant life. These words and such an unusual sentiment as that he wished to dwell in peace with all men, uttered in an exceptionally genial tone, coming after the benign expansiveness of the man who had addressed me on the road, made me think of Rousseau's paragon, the Savoyard vicar, or of some pious and good Quaker. A son, a fine, stalwart young man, arriving for his dinner, said little; but the solid and serious wife, casting a glance first at me and then through the window, repeated significantly that the clouds threatened a storm. So I bade them farewell, nor would they accept any recompense, being seemingly moved by a fine sense of duty toward strangers. Harvesting was in full progress a little way outside the village, and a girl standing upon a cart to which a pair of camels were harnessed distributed with a fork the sheaves as they were tossed up to her. But the young folk appeared altogether rougher than my warm-hearted friends. Walking back toward Urbach and sheltering from rain, I exchanged a word or two at humble homesteads, where now a lone woman burdened with the care of young children, and now a family lacking vigorous manhood, spoke feelingly

A Journey to Uràlsk—the Khirghìz

concerning the war, and asked how long I thought it would last. After noting the enormously long, ragged, poorly thatched stacks ready for threshing—which feature generally characterized the vista across the fertile steppes, devoid as they are of much barn accommodation—and having passed some neglected naphtha works, in whose neighbourhood the earth was black with oil, I reached Urbach, to find that the samovar at the only ‘tchàinaya’ and ‘traktır’ would not be prepared till six o’clock!

At this distant place, fifteen hundred miles from the Western frontier, I had thus thrust upon me positive evidence of how foreigners have been welcomed to Russia. An effort to introduce artificers from the West reflects credit upon Ivàn the Terrible. Clearly the principle of a superiority in Teutonic and Western civilization recommended itself to Peter the Great. So Würtemberg peasants, humble, contented, and mildly prosperous, brought hither that their example might raise the moujiks around them, reveal the views of Catherine. After her epoch came a change. The upper classes began to display a predilection for the French, whose language they speak easily, and whom in some respects they resemble.

But having a large border contiguous with Russia, the skilful, thorough, and persevering Teutons made the most of magnificent opportunities to penetrate the Muscovite Empire commercially, particularly since the active construction of rail-

Through Russia in War-time

ways. A long while before the present stupendous struggle among the nations, whoever possessed a knowledge of German could travel easily from Berlin to St. Petersburg, thence to Moscow, and later to Warsaw. What would any one think finding that the French guards on trains from Cologne to Paris and thence to Lyons spoke the language of Berlin? Surely that France was vastly influenced by her Eastern neighbours! We English have, as is generally acknowledged, hitherto been the greatest manufacturers of the world; but while British goods entering Russia during the year before the outbreak of the present struggle had fallen to a value of sixteen million pounds, the dominions of the Tsar purchased in the same period of the warlike Central Power articles worth nearly sixty millions sterling. As to a particular region, the Baltic Provinces, which have come under Russian rule during the past two centuries, sympathy with Germany is there considerable. What difficulties has not Russia contended against since the awakening of her new nationalistic spirit in the past thirty years! Seeking enlightenment from Russians, I have often been told bitterly that, as I suspected, many citizens of their great Empire have a leaning toward Germany. But it chanced that on a steamer in the far south I met a Lithuanian, whose conversation exemplified the truth in a very surprising manner. A dark and bilious-looking person, he spoke in an intelligent and decided manner, and soon informed me as to

A Journey to Uralsk—the Khirghiz

something of his commercial activities. Though a Russian subject, he was aglow with admiration for Teutonic characteristics. The burden of his cry was: turn wheresoever he would in the business world, he found German energy and ability carrying all before it. As for British wares, they remained the best, and the Englishman's name always ensured respect, though he was too rigid in his ideas, and, worst of all, would not supply inferior and cheap commodities. Those were the days of fearful disasters at Kòvno and Gròdno, of threatened misfortune at Riga, and, after a preliminary interchange of ideas on national economics and traits, we naturally discussed the progress of the Great War. I was told that 'Wilhelm' would restore nothing: what had been won could never be relinquished! As great a genius as Napoleon, he would surely march at once to Petrograd, and reach the Russian capital within a month! I replied that the ruler who made such an attempt could not but meet a fate as untoward as that of the over-daring leader forced to retreat from Moscow in 1812. After such clash of opinion I preferred to say little to this gentleman, whose frankness surprised me. In truth, the assured and almost gleeful tone with which he prognosticated a triumph for the fierce and common enemy in a war of gigantic importance, a veritable struggle for freedom, aroused within me a feeling of resentment akin to aversion. Suddenly, placing his hand in his pocket, he drew out a lady's watch. 'Vwy kòopeetye?'

Through Russia in War-time

(‘Will you buy?’). For a second I failed to understand. However, it appeared the handsome time-piece had been given him in liquidation of a debt, and that he was anxious to realize a portion of its worth. I excused myself, and soon afterwards he left the vessel. Such an attitude, while it confirmed and supported what I had already here and there gathered, was the single instance of the kind which came to my notice. On the contrary, when I met any one whose opinion seemed worth having, and if I thought an exchange of views judicious, I was sure to hear the avowal of a fixed determination to fight on resolutely. A cultured Russian expressed himself to me thus tersely:—“We were under the Tatars two hundred years, we have been under the Germans two hundred years, and now we mean to be our own masters.” In return I was often asked if England would prove staunch. My answer that, apart from upholding an enlightened civilization and rescuing tortured Belgium, if only for our own safety, we could not stop short of victory, gave invariable satisfaction.

The train proceeding to Uràlsk arrived at midnight in a crowded condition, but, having been thrust by the conductor into a compartment, I encroached on a small boy’s too ample domain and reposed well. In the morning the steppe had grown somewhat less level, and often in vast areas, unbroken by trees or ditches, the sight of immense accumulations of harvested corn

A Journey to Uràlsk—the Khirghìz

repeated itself. We passed camels dragging a harrow, and long strings of them harnessed to 'telègas'; moreover several times the train came to a standstill because one of these creatures preferred racing before the engine to grazing. As for the peasants, they began to remind me, on our way eastward, of certain unkempt, morose-looking beings I had seen in the north at Archangel and Vòlogda. The Tatars became more numerous as we approached the Uràl River. At Oshìnski I noticed Khirghìz, remarkable for reddish-tanned face, high cheekbones, narrow eyes, and sunken nose. It was strange to see unmistakable representatives of the Eastern nomads who swept like a tidal wave over Russia in the thirteenth century.

As the Kalmucks are veritable descendants of the Mongol stock ruled by Genghis Khan, so the Khirghìz belong to the Turkic races which constituted the bulk of the historic Golden Horde. To the number of possibly three millions, they dwell in great regions situated to the north of the Caspian and Aral Seas, and extending eastward as far as the Altai mountains. Their land contains salt, and though scarcely fit for agricultural purposes, confers considerable prosperity. According to a document dealing with their condition at the end of the nineteenth century, they owned half a million horses and several times as many sheep, besides great herds of goats and horned cattle. Being great riders, they travel about to suit their requirements as pastor-

Through Russia in War-time

alists. The Khirghìz submitted early to Russian control, and appear less wild than the predatory Turkomans, who, till the capture of Merv, some thirty years ago, not only made frequent raids on neighbouring folk, but took numerous prisoners, especially Persian women, to hold as slaves or for ransom.

All farms gradually disappeared as we journeyed eastward, and huge untidy stacks ceased to dot the horizon. The country, again absolutely flat, had become covered with scanty coarse grass, but I heard from a fellow-passenger that the land is not without value. The train having suddenly crossed the River Uràl where it lies in a depression, lined on either side with large sallows, next passed slowly through a collection of one-storied shanties with roofs formed of ragged wooden planks. Then, Uràlsk station being reached, I had not long to wait for an opportunity to observe the Khirghìz, since seven or eight of them strode abreast in the middle of the main street. A strange sight! For their dark and ugly faces were overshadowed by headgear of extraordinary shape. Vaguely reminding me of a thickened Capuchin hood, it had in front a horizontal protuberance over the eyes, in the manner of certain mediaeval helmets while, behind, another extension fell over the nape of the neck. Relief is so secured against the severity of the sun's rays in summer and the piercing blasts of winter. But this head-covering is not always worn: thus an imposing Khirghìz, ambling down the street

A Journey to Uràlsk—the Khirghìz

on a fine horse and holding in his hand a staff so long as to look like a lance, wore a splendid round black fur hat.

Hotel accommodation is not the strong point of Uràlsk, but I secured the use of a large room in a set of ill-furnished chambers, and without much difficulty obtained meals at a private establishment called a ‘cloob,’ and possessing a very pretty garden.

To expect magnificence on the borders of Khirghìz steppes would be foolish, nor is Uràlsk beautiful. The broad streets run at right angles and contain a few brick buildings, while at one end of the main thoroughfare rises a high red-brick triumphal arch. But, lacking paint where such was once, most of the habitations are of wood and mean, and more than one of their number in a by-street has a wall formed of adjoining ground. I had not before observed in an important town many women and children with bare feet. The place, which is in a territory belonging to Cossacks, a folk untaxed by the Tsar in return for military services, appeared far less prosperous than the town of Temròok, in the fertile Kubàn district. It is worth while to ask who these people are.

Over a large territory southward and eastward of Kiev, early a population formed of fugitives, and those who for one reason or another were rebels against the established order. It appears that about the year 1500, in order to provide a shield against aggressive Krim Tatars, the

Through Russia in War-time

Polish Government encouraged a loose military organization among the Zaporagians, or dwellers on islands 'below the rapids' of the Lower Dneiper. In that situation and other settlements on the Rivers Don and Uràl a pastoral or agricultural life was led around 'stanitzas,' or villages, a sort of communistic existence having sprung up on the basis that each man must take up arms when required.

Each adult male Cossack becomes a soldier for four years, though obedient to the call during a much longer period. An organization capable of placing in the field over three hundred thousand men, whose officers receive strict training at military schools, is a valuable addition to the Empire's war strength. Seven-eighths of the warriors are mounted, and their skill when in the saddle is proverbial. As to the internal organization, the householders of a village meet in assembly to elect an elder, and, through their own judges, deal with all minor disputes. Questions of taxation and schooling and land cultivation receive in a similar way local attention. It says much for the advantages of freedom and decentralization that, even with a slightly tarnished ancient heredity, the Cossacks are often better educated and more prosperous than the general mass of Russians. However, it was evident to me that I was now in a district unfavoured by Nature.

The weather being oppressive, I fortunately discovered in the chief street two or three small





KHIRGHIZ AT URALSK.



TATAR DWELLINGS ON THE STEPPE NEAR URALSK.

A Journey to Uràlsk—the Khirghìz

shops sufficiently attractive for an occasional customer to partake within their precincts of kvas, or cîtro, or even an ice, the Russian equivalent of which, ‘moròzhenoye,’ proving particularly troublesome for me to utter correctly. However, I solaced my pride by the reflection that a traveller proceeding rapidly through an extensive country will of necessity encounter difficulties in pronunciation. No sooner has he educated his ear to satisfy one district than he must set to work again and learn to please another.

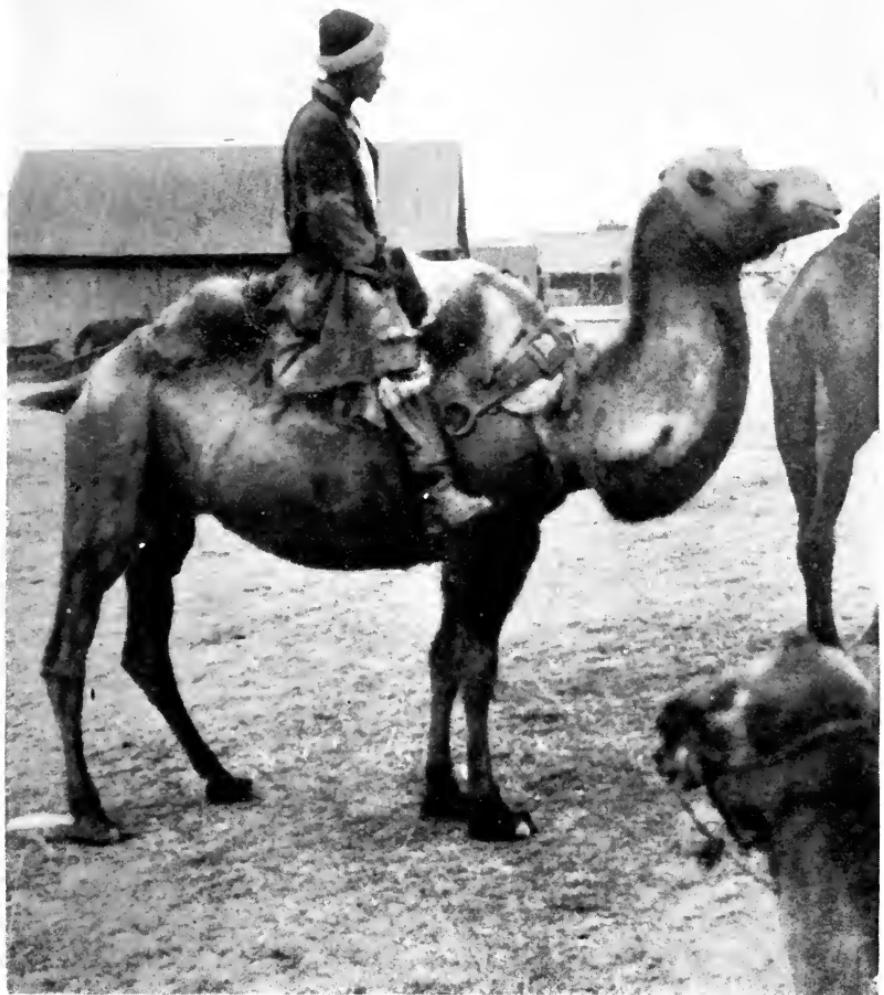
The morning after my arrival, I set out to explore. On my way toward a camp of Khirghìz I found five in fur caps and dark of face seated on a bench, a pleasant-looking young girl being of their number. Dull and lethargic, they were not altogether unintelligent, for at sight of my camera one cried out, ‘Kartèeny.’ Farther on, and below a rude market-place, where a little business went on at fruit-stalls, lay an almost bare plain, through which passes the Uràl River, and here, in front of some grazing camels, stood several white ridge tents, open at one end. So small were they that, under my closer inspection, a woman and a girl, who with dark, shining eyes regarded me wonderingly, appeared to fill much of the shelter in which they sat. An old man, wearing a fearfully disreputable felt hat, received me and my propitiatory offering almost inarticulately, while a brown-skinned, erect little boy, destitute of clothing, and perhaps four years old, stolidly surveyed me, and seemed

Through Russia in War-time

satisfied with things in general. Beyond assuring myself by question and answer that they were Khirghìz and noting their surroundings and the accessories of a primitive mode of life, I did not get far with them, for they understood few Russian expressions, and I could muster no word of Turkic dialect. Their visible property consisted, besides the tents, of several horses and camels and one or two wagons, drawn up near some men who lay on the ground apathetically watching an iron pot which hung over a small fire. However, a low 'telèga' came up from beyond the river, and wishing to establish a further brief relationship with members of the race, I successfully inquired of the driver if the persons seated behind him were his wife and child. Better still, meeting later a typical Khirghìz as he was watering his horse on the river-bank, I spoke a few words, and prevailed on him to accept a melon.

My humble ambition was to find a member of this famous nomad people astride a camel, and when such a one suddenly came into view in a large market-place where many bales of goods were being transferred to 'telègas,' I hastened up and lifted my camera. No sooner was the deed done than I felt a hand upon my shoulder, and found two gendarmes at my side. What was I doing with that thing? I answered that it was a mere nothing, an instrument of no importance whatever. Yes, but who gave me permission to use it? Well, no one had exactly

URALSK
KHIRGHIZ



A KHIRGHIZ. URALSK.

To face p. 242.



A Journey to Uràlsk—the Khirghìz

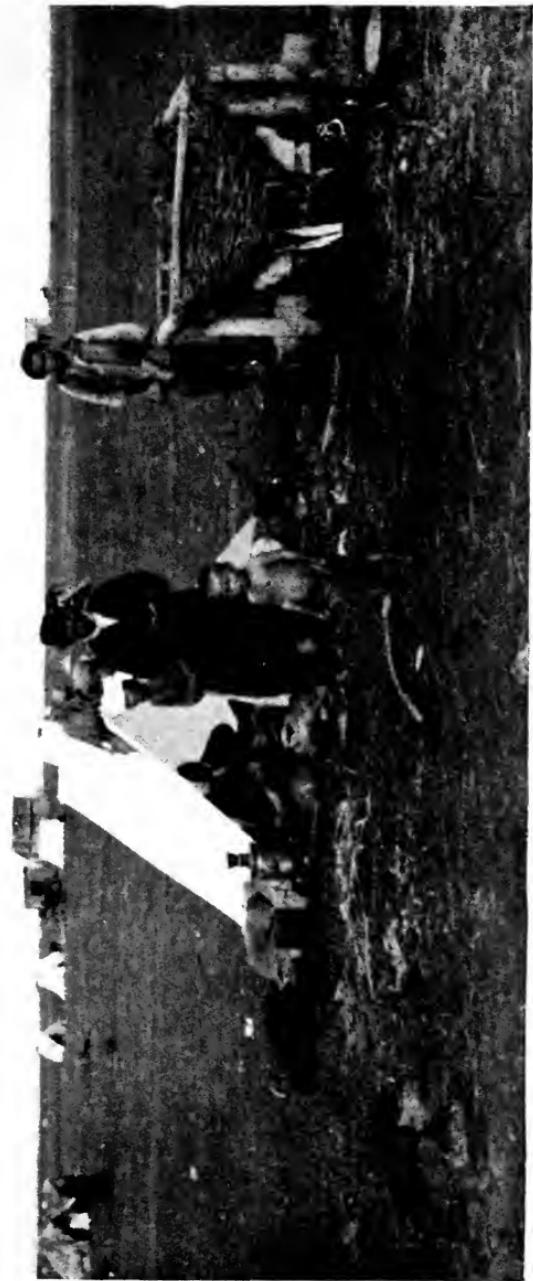
given me permission. Where were my papers? I replied that I had not yet received them back from the police when I left the hotel. Then I must accompany the gendarmes to the hotel. Upon our way down the chief street we met an officer. He inquired of the men what they were doing, and next, addressing me in good French, remarked: "Your profession and age are such and such. What is your nationality? Ah, Anglitchàneen!" he ejaculated, as if relieved from perplexity. Turning to the gendarmes, he dismissed them, and I thanked him. Walking across the river, and reflecting that I was in the Khirghìz Provinces south of Siberia, I passed on the steppe some solitary Tatar dwellings of the simplest character. The walls were made of clods of earth piled on one another, and unplastered, while a small hole acted in lieu of a window. Doubtless because it was summer, near by stood some diminutive tents. Returning to the town and walking in the main street, I carefully compared the appearance of Khirghìz and local Tatars. Several of the latter had reached a good position in society. Thus one wore the uniform of a University student and another appeared as an under-officer. Here, in both these Turkic races, the face is large and almost hairless, brown, with small eyes in narrow slits exhibiting an inclination downward and toward each other. The cheekbones form a prominent feature and the nose is small. But often in the Khirghìz the face has a somewhat wild and fierce

Through Russia in War-time

look, a dark reddish colour, and the bridge of the nose is almost absent.

I have learned that the speech alike of Tatars, Khirghiz, and Kalmucks is marked by an "agglutinative" quality. What does that mean? Professor Max Müller, a renowned master, tells us that in Turkic dialects significant syllables are added after a root, and a long word is built up, whose parts can be clearly distinguished. Touching two great divisions of the human race, he says that the Turanians, or nomadic races of Asia, more than the Aryans or agricultural races, have kept their words as originally formed, so that if any one wishes to resolve compound words into their individual elements, his task will be lighter when he deals with languages such as Turkic than with, for example, Hindustani. Originally, the Aryans, like the Turanians, were wont to add terminations to a root in order to modify its meaning, but while in Turkic the termination has an import which can be easily recognized, in the Aryan tongues often such does not obtain. Thus, 'bakar-im' is Turkic for 'I regard,' and 'bakar-sin' for 'thou regardest.' If now we examine, as well as the first two and above given, the remaining words of the tense we find all differ from one another. Each is definite and unmistakable. It is otherwise in Hindustani, for in that language 'hai' means not only 'he is,' but 'thou art,' while 'hain' implies 'we are' as well as 'they are.' But ambiguities such as these would not suit the

KHIRGHIZ ENCAMPMENT. URALSK.





A Journey to Uràlsk—the Khirghìz

needs of a simple nomadic folk who, mingling seldom with strangers, acquire neither versatility nor subtlety of intellect. I now glanced at another portion of the work, and found that the Turk, in order to convey the idea of possession, appends pronouns to his nouns. Thus, while 'bâbâ' signifies 'father,' 'bâbâ-m' means 'my father.' And, as 'aghâ' signifies 'lord,' so 'aghân' means 'thy lord.' The method of gluing syllables to a root is seen to even greater advantage in a verb. 'Sev' is the equivalent of 'love,' and 'sev-ish-dir-il-me-mek' of a good deal more, namely, 'not to be brought to love one another.' Yet the Turk, who appears to revel in enriching his vocabulary by the addition of separate sounds, one after another, at the end of a root, never sets a preposition in advance of a word's essential part, in the manner common with us.

Quitting Uràlsk in the afternoon, on my way to Saràtov, a city of the southern Volga, I was enabled again to observe the interminable steppe. Sometimes a large herd of horses or cattle arrested my attention, for it would number as many as possibly two hundred animals. Commandingly rises at every station, through this part of the country, a high and handsome tower of red brick, having in its upper part a great tank of water, obtained from rivers or wells, and especially convenient for the engines on the railways. What an enormous range of view must be obtainable from the topmost story! Although the season was summer, never in the course of

Through Russia in War-time

travelling several thousand miles, during this journey across Russia, did I succeed in keeping a window in the least open at night. Ever some one, sheltered from each puff of air, would sooner or later discover my cunning schemes and decisively object to them, the right to apply an hermetical seal being exercised ruthlessly by quite young persons. So long as the train stirred, though only at fifteen miles per hour, the conditions were bearable. If, for a hidden reason, the delay grew considerable, it was apt to cause some little discomfort, more noticeable if I happened to occupy a lower berth. I must acknowledge that any feeling of oppression wore off soon after rising.

Looking out at Urbach at daybreak, I saw men in light blue uniforms with trousers tight in the lower part. They were Austrian prisoners, and appeared well fed and contented. With their slight build and clean-shaven, rather dark faces, they offered a sharp contrast to the lighter complexioned, thick-bearded, and stouter moujiks. Upon the platform some of the captured had drawn a quantity of water for their ablutions from a limited supply intended to quench thirst. I was glad to see that, when an under station-official pointed out the mistake, he did so with great good-humour. The party was guarded by a few soldiers of superlative physique, set off by a gorgeous dress and very full display of medals.

On again we went toward Saràtov, while oppo-

A Journey to Uràlsk—the Khirghìz

site me now sat a lady journeying with two young daughters by a route, almost necessarily circuitous in regions so sparsely inhabited, to a distant part of Siberia. Interested concerning her nationality, I learnt soon she was a "Hebrew," a designation previously used to me in Russia by others of her people. However difficult it might sometimes be to guess the race correctly from the features, it was never possible to mistake the pride with which the avowal was made. My fellow-traveller, with whom I did not discuss political or social questions, and whose husband filled a post of some importance, kindly spoke to me of the Khirghìz. In winter they prefer, for greater warmth, dwellings made of mud bricks, such as are inhabited by many Tatars, while the white material of their summer tents is a thick woollen. Cattle and herds constitute their wealth and means of exchange. Here, then, is a primitive, pastoral race unbroken to the constant care and forethought demanded by civilization, loving to roam, passionately attached to inherited traits, scorning modern devices. Disliking work, they exhibit thievish tendencies and reject a boon seldom pressed upon them, education. I was pleased to think I had exchanged a few words with beings who might probably have delighted the author of "The Human Understanding," a sage maintaining the doctrine that, if any one would study the mind of man, he should look first into the souls of savages and children.

CHAPTER XIX

THE VOLGA

ENDLESS appeared the chocolate-coloured steppe and its covering of golden sheaves between Urbach and Saràtov. But the paucity of the population was equally remarkable, an observation attesting the strenuous summer qualities of the peasants, who were to be seen abroad as early as four o'clock—for instance, a man ploughing and several women making ready for the day's toil. Far from often a thrashing-machine sought to diminish the bulk of the stacks. Russian scenery, in general, is characterized by immensity of everything save mountains, though in the Caucasus some peaks surpass Mont Blanc, and glaciers extend over a greater surface than those of the Bernese Oberland. Few forests are wilder and larger than such as cover the North of Tsarland. No river in Europe is broader or longer than the Volga. Moreover, as the deserts of Arabia and sandy wastes of North Africa have by their illimitableness instilled the Moslem's belief in one God of transcendent power, so the vastness of the Russian plains may have played

The Volga

a part in originating the mysticism which permeates a portion of the great Slav nation. But the chief highway of Russian water-borne commerce has more than grandeur; it is not devoid of beauty. Here and there tower tolerably high cliffs, and a feature of the river that impressed me, over and above its reigning position among the streams silently draining half a continent, was the steeply inclined bank conferring on villages and towns a picturesque appearance. The collections of dwellings are situated, not on the flatter side of the stream, but upon sites rising gradually to from fifty to several hundred feet. It follows that, whether the observer from the deck of a steamer is directing his attention either to humble villages consisting of sombre isolated log huts, or to a resplendent city, he finds, among the factors capable of swaying his artistic soul, position.

At no time, upon this long journey, did I more realize the originality of Russia than when, looking westward across the wide Volga, while the sun was not yet high in the heavens, I first directed my eyes toward Saràtov. Both shores stand here at some little height, from which cause the low wooded island in mid-stream hides not the gorgeous spectacle presented by the city and its backing of lofty hills. As the people's love of colour and gilding is revealed in ikòns and domes, the peasant women's dresses and holiday kerchiefs, and the large lettering on the shops, so it is betrayed in the tints which characterize the walls of houses

Through Russia in War-time

and churches. However, such a city gives, on closer acquaintance, a less favourable impression, because of its muddy streets. A steamboat bore passengers pleasantly round half the island and across the river but, when I set foot anew on solid earth, minor troubles began. For a moment I almost regretted I had not decided to seek the services of a young native of the country who should accompany me as interpreter. My object being to obtain a cabin on a fine vessel proceeding to Kazan, I covered without delay the distance to the landing stage where lay the office of the Company: only two or three hundred yards along a sloping path, plentifully strewn with great stones and pieces of timber. But the hour of humiliation had arrived. Within a glass office provided with two little windows, upon different sides, for the issue of tickets, sat at a table a clerk. To him I explained my wants, enunciating with clearness some words lately acquired to express a request for a single-berthed cabin. As the first applicant, my chance of satisfaction should have been good. Alas! I received a gruff and unintelligible reply. Yet an inner something whispered that, being at the 'kassa' so soon, in justice I should fare well. Half an hour elapsed and my spirits began to fall. Then an acquaintance from the train, providentially appearing, told me that no tickets were distributed till the steamer reached the quay. In the meantime, the official had begun to inscribe the various names of applicants. Taking

The Volga

a place in the pushing queue, almost a mob, I had nearly gained my turn, when a man behind, inquiring whether I was a German, said the first-class passengers were separately dealt with at the other wicket. His cunning manœuvre, the success of which depended on a false representation, won him a place, but militated against my comfort on the voyage. However, in a few minutes I could laugh at this absurd episode. What was any trifling disadvantage to a spirit fortified by successfully sated ardour for travel, and by the buoyancy resulting from constant novelty, movement, and variety?

Our ship, which sped tolerably fast up-stream, stayed its progress perhaps every two or three hours opposite a town, the scene being seldom noteworthy. But at Voskresènsk both the landing-stage and the sloping shore were thronged with densely packed inhabitants, who, stirred by a general impulse and gazing intently in our direction, cheered, shouted words of farewell, and waved handkerchiefs incessantly. A fine sight, indeed: even more affecting than that so familiar when a great ocean liner in peace-time leaves port to depart across the deep, since now prevailed the element of patriotism. Here stood the folk of the district united by one purpose; each would impress on the thirty or forty young men, leaving under mobilization orders, that they enjoyed the confidence and love, and called forth the prayers of all assembled. Cut off as I was from free intercourse with those

Through Russia in War-time

around, for me the incident was valuable. Sometimes the rough moujik who set the recruits' little bundles on board received a few kopecks for his trouble; at others he retreated quickly and kept his hand beside him. When Voskresensk had been left miles behind, these fine, ruddy-faced young fellows in top-boots showed themselves rather high-spirited. Instead of remaining upon the main-deck, they crowded to the after part of the promenade, and as they would not obey orders the vessel's captain, coming up, spoke to them, but without avail. Equal to the occasion, he disappeared, to send in his place a small sailor, presumably a boatswain, who, taking by the hand the very tallest of the offenders, led him below. But, discipline and authority having been asserted, such of the young man's companions as thought well to stay were not interfered with. They were splendid specimens of humanity, in every way fit to become good soldiers, as I should imagine; and when some one remarked to me that it was a shame to take such youths, I valued the expression of opinion because it proved vigorous warm-heartedness, a trait not easily tested by a stranger. A cabin companion took his meals privately in our stateroom, but I preferred to use the dining-saloon. There soon a trifling incident preluded not unimportant developments. The slowness of the steward to understand my wishes suggested to a young man at an adjoining table the notion of offering his help. He spoke with



A LANDING STAGE. THE VOLGA.



The Volga

difficulty in German, a language which I considered ill-chosen on a large steamer, and had hitherto carefully avoided. But, remembering how large a population uses that tongue at the great towns in this region of the Volga, I thought the rule must be here less strict, and followed his lead when, after a moment's hesitation, I thanked him. Certainly I should have been pleased to battle through the meal in no exacting manner, as often before, being satisfied that, if occasionally such mischance occurred as the appearance of a vegetable when I expected fish, or the serving of chopped meat in a hollow tomato though I coveted a sweet, yet in the long run my hunger would be amply appeased. The acquaintance thus begun continued, and if my new friend laboured a good deal when giving birth to audible ideas, his brightness and vivacity made amends for the ceaselessness of his struggles. So engaged, we stood facing the breeze in the forward portion of the upper deck. Unfortunately, my affable fellow-passenger, showing a trait common among his countrymen, became very animated in conversation and so attracted the attention of a man having dark, immobile features who lounged with a companion near by. "Please do not speak in that language with this gentleman," said our observer, when he passed us, to the young Moscow student, who, being in training as an advocate, contested the matter eloquently, arguing that it was his duty to help a traveller who could not speak Russian. "He

Through Russia in War-time

is no Englishman," muttered the other in a low voice. Probably my appearance had become somewhat shabby ; besides which, carrying a considerable amount of money in remote places, as already explained, I had delayed resumption of insignia distinctive of honest and reputable Britons, namely, a gold chain and a signet ring ! Feeling that I had unwittingly blundered into a false position, and that, however disagreeable and peremptory he of the mask-like face might be, his request was just, I uttered in his hearing a proposal to speak in French ; a change of no consequence to me, since the student handled the language of our staunch ally only a little worse than that of the enemy. Shortly afterwards the young lawyer, whose frankness and good breeding impressed me favourably, shook my hand, and with the warmth of manner frequent among Russians bade me good-night.

Next morning the scenery had improved. Flatness ruled on the eastern shore, but opposite, to the west, precipitous reddish cliffs rose to a height of, I should think, three or four hundred feet. Yet another kind of interest stirred within me since, from the after portion of the promenade deck, Russian peasants could be well observed below. Here, too, in restful stillness and solitude, I could glance down on a group of forlorn Austrian prisoners travelling to obtain employment. Sitting or lounging among the coils of rope which obscured the cover of a hatchway, they seldom spoke or troubled to look

The Volga

over the taffrail. One man stood out from his fellows. Young, with a full brown beard, and fine white teeth which showed frequently in a pronounced sardonic smile, he wore upon his left sleeve a red cross. Sometimes he sang a few words or hummed a bar or two of an air self-consciously, as if to say, "I am doing my best." This was the leader, the party's spokesman, who, doubtless affected by misfortune, railed continuously at the world and his friends. On three occasions within a brief space of time when passengers crossed the range of his restless blue eyes, he pulled up his trouser and exhibited the healed surface of an extensive wound. It soon appeared that at the last farm on which these soldiers were employed each had received six roubles for the month's toil, and now, their leader said, as usual with excess of gesture, they hoped for more. But life was not worth living with his companions, there was no pleasing them! At this moment a superior tchinòvnik, wearing the usual peaked green flat cap, leaned over the rail, and, speaking in German, evinced an interest in the man and his fellows; moreover, threw down a rouble. The passenger of expressionless face made no remark and walked away, but I dared not address the captives. As for the prize, it caused no little commotion, and the chief, who had secured the money, looked up with an injured countenance, crying: "There now, sir; they say you gave us two roubles, and that I have kept one for myself!"

Through Russia in War-time

Was it not one, sir? and is it for the man who caught it or for all of us?" A second and similar gift fell fluttering below, but the donor did not wait for any appeal to be launched concerning its distribution. So in their blue-grey uniforms and high caps these poor fellows, neither pale nor ragged, and looking fairly well fed, listlessly idled away hours bringing gloom and dejection.

Before noon the peasants, men and women, issued from third-class quarters and, crowding together at a table, partook of a meal in the open air. Here a motherly creature next a big and moustached Austrian, whose left hand was bandaged, pushed toward him successively three or four pieces of sugar, the first one minute but each later portion larger than the last. She also filled his tin mug from a teapot. Saying nothing, he raised his hand to his hat in soldier-like fashion. As for the moujiks, several placed themselves round a table supporting a huge kettle of weak tea. Heavy of build and blunt-featured, hatless, with greasy, tangled, luxuriant locks often falling wildly over their foreheads, but always dense and cut square across the nape of the neck, they wore top-boots, black trousers, and 'rubashkas' (shirts), red, white, or black. Striking off enormous slabs from round loaves of tolerably white colour, they ate vigorously, sometimes waiting to swallow copious draughts of tea, while, towards the end of the repast, each purchased from a sailor-

The Volga

like man for three kopecks a small dried herring, to be dissected with the fingers and consumed as a relish. The women, kerchiefed, and like the men, taciturn, crossed themselves several times before eating. Into their tea they threw either pieces of apple or a small plum, or nipped a piece of sugar and held it in the mouth while drinking. They possessed a sublime capacity for sleep, and it was not unusual to see a couple, possibly mother and daughter or sisters, who had thrown themselves down, perhaps entwined in each other's arms, upon the hatch. Simple, peaceable and affectionate appeared these peasants, and dull of mind.

Arriving at another fine city, Samàra, the vessel stayed but a brief period. Again a high sloping shore, covered with tiny dròschkies and swollen isvòshchiks in long blue padded dressing-gowns and Beefeater hats! Here the Hebrew lady with her two daughters joined a train which should take them direct to their destination. She had crossed Dover Straits fifteen years ago, and still remembered a few words of English. Of what a miracle was she with her companions capable, for having first filled to overflowing a little dròschky with many a package of every conceivable shape, the party next found, as if by legerdemain, comfortable accommodation in the vehicle, and experienced no mishap when the isvòshchik, signalling to his steed, drove off briskly over a most irregular roadway.

Gradually, since my vague encounter with the

Through Russia in War-time

man of mask-like countenance, I had become aware that I was under observation. Thus, if I stood overlooking the peasants and Austrians as they sat on the lower deck, one of a group of four or five men, who talked much together, kept near me. If I wrote in my little diary, the sphinx made a mental note of the circumstance. Moreover, as I passed some otherwise amiable-looking young fellows, they regarded me with hostility. How easily is suspicion increased when it has been aroused! Even a handsome, debonair man, much given to perambulating the decks with a proudly stepping, elegantly booted maiden, who wore her dark locks in the fashion of our Early Victorian period—even he seemed much surprised when he discovered by chance that I could write a few words of Russian. Probably news of my evil nature reached the waiter in the ‘stolovaya,’ since he kept me an unconscionable time waiting for the breakfast I sorely needed on a raw morning. Only the tchinovnik who had befriended the prisoners showed himself genial. Clearly my indiscretion in exhibiting a knowledge of German had brought harmful results, and more might come of it!

An occasional passenger steamer, besides enormous barges drawn by little tugs, and provided with one or two deck houses, formed the chief signs of floating life on the Volga. Sometimes one saw a lone fisherman who in a small boat was wafted by a curiously shaped sail, lug, or lateen. The large and comfortable vessels

LIBRARY OF
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY



GEORGIAN PEDLAR ON A VOLGA STEAMER.

To face p. 258.



The Volga

for travellers offer numerous, if rather small, cabins, and I was told that, had it not been war-time, the attractions of social intercourse, enhanced by music and singing, even dancing, would have made the voyage more pleasurable. Always remained the monotonous immensity of the river, though once in a way thickly wooded shores rejoiced the eye, or confluence with another stream satisfied the soul's demand for novelty. A glorious sunset lives in my memory. One evening the departing monarch left in his wake crimson hues as of a mighty conflagration calling forth, in every direction, the hostility of tiny clouds, bluish-grey battalions suddenly filling the heavens. Soon the forces of air coalesced, darkness increased, and the victory seemed complete. Then bright stars stole out and assured us the reign of light would continue.

To one who had seen Kalmucks and Khirghiz, for a while a certain tameness surrounded the ordinary Russian peasant; but if Fate ever again takes me to the middle Volga district, I shall seek out certain Finnish tribes, the Tcheremis, Tchuvash, and Mordva, who combine respect toward ancient deities with Orthodox observances. St. Nicholas is held in esteem among them, and both a good principle, 'Thora,' and an evil one, 'Shaitan,' are recognized. These Finns remained pagan much later than the Russians. Writers describe them as gloomy and surly. I was able to step ashore when the vessel stopped and observe the people upon the landing-stage, where,

Through Russia in War-time

opposite the ticket office, stood a little shrine or chapel. Within it, tall candles flamed and the air stayed thick with incense, but because of the crowd it was difficult to enter. Perhaps the peasants uttered a devout prayer for safety before embarking on the perils of a voyage even such as ours. At one spot the steamer made fast to a quay in order that a fresh supply of liquid fuel, in appearance like the crude dark-green naphtha of Bakù, might be pumped into tanks in the hold. Several red-shirted peasants controlled the operation, and watching them, I satisfied myself as to a detail of the moujik's dress. We had run into regions having an early autumn, and on the day in question not only were the heavens leaden-hued, but a disagreeable breeze blew which, lifting a workman's 'rubashka,' showed me that it was really and truly the only garment hiding his nakedness above the belt.

CHAPTER XX

KAZÀN AND NÌZHNI NÒVGOROD

AT last, on a slight elevation, the ancient city of Kazàn, famous for considerable Tatar buildings and population, and a past subjection to Asiatic conquerors, loomed forth in a foggy atmosphere. Having reached a minor town on a shore supporting a heterogeneous concourse of persons in dirty streets, while between this active scene and the river bank lie great stocks of timber and other merchandise, I passed through deep black mud to a tramway and, after a journey of several miles, stepped out of the car in Kazàn. Naturally I scanned the Tatars closely, as I stood in their market-place, where, at booths, they sell a good many articles from old iron upwards. To their light brown or even yellow faces, a few long black hairs give a semblance of moustache and beard. Similarly eyebrows and lashes make but little show. Looking round, I saw small eyes set in apertures narrow, but not markedly oblique. The nose is far less prominent than in the Crimean representatives of the race. Many of the Tatars here seem civilized and intelligent, and the faces mostly lack the cruel

Through Russia in War-time

and almost savage look distinguishing this people and the Kalmucks at Astrakhan. One of the chief sights is an old and renowned Tatar tower, seven stories high, and vaguely suggesting a Chinese pagoda. I gazed upon this peculiar edifice intently, but could not get close to its base, because of a soldier on guard, who sagaciously remarked, when I had spoken to him, "You are not a Russian." A hill supports the Kremlin's battlemented walls, which, with bastions at intervals, remain as constructed by the Eastern erstwhile conquerors of the country. But, just outside the principal and imposing gateway, rises a very different object, a Greek-Russian church of unusually simple, quaint, yet not undignified architecture. At hand, in some municipal buildings, is a museum full of disinterred prehistoric relics. These were found not far from Kazàn, at Bolgàri, a name sufficiently reminiscent of Slav immigration from the south. Here lie, in glass cases, whorls used many centuries ago in spinning, bronze and iron spear heads hurled by ancient warriors, who looked like Russian peasants of to-day; and bone combs and blue beads and other objects. So much, then, had I seen in a flying visit to this historic Tatar stronghold, whence the Khans were expelled in the middle of the sixteenth century by Ivàn the Terrible, a monarch of blood and iron if ever one trod the earth: an able being of surpassingly strong will and seldom equalled fierceness.

What was the general influence of the former

Kazàn and Nìzhni Nòvgorod

Tatar dominance? Regarding intermarriage, no doubt the difference of Mohammedan and Christian faiths acted as a powerful check. As to certain facial characteristics, for instance the high cheek bones of some Russians, they are considered due not so much to Tatar as to Finnish blood. The Slavs entered a land of Finns long previous to the Tatar period, during which the barbarity of the Turkic conquerors affected manners and customs, introduced a form of slavery before the serf-making ukàzes of Borìs Godunòv and Peter the Great. Concerning the repression of women, who till the time of the latter monarch, stayed in their own and the children's apartments, some modern authorities consider such largely due to Byzantine influence. They point out how among the ancient Greeks the wife lived in comparative seclusion. Nor can the extreme ecclesiasticism of the Greek Orthodox faith, working on early Christian ideas of women's subjection, have very actively aided feminine liberation.

Having made my way from Kazàn to the landing stage, I was suddenly and peremptorily asked by a gendarme for my papers, and then saw arrive a stout individual attired in a Tyrolean hat, a yellow coat, and black trousers, who wielded a shiny black walking-stick. No sign of geniality lit up his dark and stern face. Then came others—that is, a superior uniformed police-officer, and a Customs official, who read aloud and well every word of the lengthy exhortation at the beginning of my passport, yet strangely seemed to

Through Russia in War-time

know very little English. The dark man cast doubts upon the validity of my Foreign Office safeguard, because its Russian *visé* had been issued by a Consul-General in New York, which attitude evoked from me an asseveration of that dignitary's importance. A typical peasant stood near, eager to satisfy his curiosity as to what it was all about, but obeyed a hint conveyed by a wave of my hand that he should withdraw. Soon the dark man, opening a pocket-book, requested me to insert my signature. Then he left me for a few minutes, but returned and restored the passport. I sauntered about and watched the Tatars, entered a shop or two, and felt pleased. However, on the landing stage I found myself once more accosted by this man of Kazan, whose sinister glance told me what it is to be a suspect. My papers were subjected once more to examination, while, having purchased a splendid melon, golden and yet green, firm but not hard, I stepped upon the deck of the steamer. In about half an hour the dark man, beckoning me down, showed the way into a little room behind the ticket office, where the officer of police courteously invited me to be seated. Though betraying occasional gleams of annoyance when I could not understand him, he never lapsed from urbanity. Hither now gradually crowded into a small space the following :—the Customs' expert in languages, the Moscow student, gay Lothario, and a young lady passenger whom I had not seen before. The police-officer, seated

Kazàn and Nìzhni Nòvgorod

at a little table opposite me, and exhibiting a look of determination, began to investigate. Asking me to produce my small ‘carnet,’ or notebook, he pronounced several rough sketches therein harmless, for, when necessary, I explained without difficulty what they were intended to convey, and naturally enough there is nothing heinous in depictions of Kalmuck tents, a Khirghìz head-dress, a moujìk, and so on. The Moscow student, at this point, speaking in better French than I thought he possessed, explained the position bluntly. I was under suspicion. However, if I would affix my name to a declaration forming the lower half of a protocol, whose upper portion set forth the case against me, I might depart. With natural indignation and some little warmth, I asked if I looked the character, and nourish a hope that the manner of the appeal did not prejudice my cause. Yet the practical question stayed:—Would I append my signature to a document in the vernacular expressing that I had spoken the language of the foe because I did not know Russian, and indulged in photography upon the steamer in ignorance that it was a forbidden pleasure? Silent as to the sphinx’s companion, a passenger who had used a large camera full under my eyes, I confined my attention and argument to the proposition before me. Declining for some time to sign any paper written in Russian, I still hesitated when its purport was revealed to me in French clearly enough by the obliging and ingenuous young lady. But

Through Russia in War-time

with quick intelligence she suggested (and earned thereby my gratitude, a sentiment I was not slow to convey) that I should write out the gist of the statement in French and complete it as desired, both of which things being done, I thought the matter at an end. Then the police-officer gently inquired whether I had employed my little apparatus in Kazan. Yes, on the roll I removed and gave him were some pictures of the Kremlin, and several Tatars. He now feared that until some films could be developed I must remain in the city. Rightly or wrongly, the prospect displeased me, and remembering the motto *Civis Romanus sum*, I requested favourable treatment, even felt tempted to pronounce the name, well known in Russia, of a great Foreign Minister, whose aid I should have been loath to invoke lightly in my paltry affairs. In the end I was told that I might continue the journey up the Volga; so, at the first opportunity, the warm-hearted Moscow student shook my hand. Reflecting on this incident, I acknowledged that the authorities had done what was necessary and no more, for however innocently a subject of the Tsar, ignorant of our tongue, might have been travelling in an out-of-the-way part of the British Isles during war-time, he would have subjected himself to as serious suspicion, and possibly a good deal less considerate treatment.

The journey to Nizhni Novgorod was not remarkable, except for another wonderful sky at the hour of sunset, when countless small greyish

Kazàn and Nìzhni Nòvgorod

clouds filled the entire heavens. This city of the Volga is situated imposingly, at least as to its Kremlin, whose gigantic walls crown a height overlooking the mouth of the confluent River Oka. Upon the opposite bank of that lesser and yet tolerably broad stream, here well bridged, lies, dominated by some great churches, the area of the famous Fair, well seen from the hill up which I climbed in the course of brief wanderings beyond the Kremlin. After such an effort, breakfast became necessary even if I had to drink tea and eat eggs and bread among some shock-headed peasants in a 'tchàinaya.' Though the season of the 'Yàrmarka' was not concluded, having descended and crossed over the Oka, I could well believe that the glory of the great Fair is diminishing coincidently with a modernization of business. But something strange attracted my notice before I entered the special precincts. About fifty men advanced, carrying on their shoulders large new birch brooms. Then, as if they were a great corps of gardeners hired to remove each blemish from the surface of an enormous lawn, they turned their attention with measured stroke to a fine cobble-stoned roadway. These men wore the uniform of Austria-Hungary, and, if not of joyous appearance, gave no sign of being reduced to scanty commons. The streets of the Fair cross at right angles, and its goods are displayed in continuous one-storied houses. The season was late, the hour still early—ten o'clock—and no

Through Russia in War-time

throngs met my gaze. Here stood together many stores where Armenians or Persians waited in small groups for customers to purchase furs, or countless samovars filled adjacent windows and corresponding wall and counter space, or in successive shops were exhibited clasp knives in packets, or rivals made offers of men's under-wear in profusion. It must be understood that a chief characteristic of the 'Yàrmarka' is that the purchaser does not inspect mere samples of wares kept in bulk elsewhere. He beholds a small variety of articles, but they are stocked in great quantities. As I returned towards the busy quays of this lively city I observed another set of captives at work. They were making a great drain. The enormous scale on which the fearful European conflict is being waged was brought home to me by the wide distribution in Russia of those who have surrendered.

Although now the attractiveness of the Volga voyage began to pall, I continued it for a day or two. Most of the passengers had disembarked, but Miss High-heels remained and some young fellows. One evening, after I had retired, I awoke to hear pleasant sounds of a kind to linger long in the memory. Two or three gay boys must have placed themselves outside the lady's cabin, and, as I presumed, one, blest with an exquisite voice, serenaded her in a ditty. Ah! here obtruded itself none of the melancholy distinctive of Russian folk-songs. Rather became audible a skilful improvisation as of a troub-

Kazàn and Nìzhni Nòvgorod

dour, while interwoven with word and note a spirit of humorous raillery manifested itself. For now and again the melody subsided, its place being taken by a chorus of youthful chuckling, genuine as the merry-making of lads whose hearts refuse to acknowledge the existence of care. Thus ripples of delicately modulated laughter, in alternation with snatches of pretty song, renewed in my consciousness the freshness of long ago.

It was disappointing to pass Yaroslàvl, an ancient, picturesque, and interesting place, at night-time, but I had an opportunity to walk about in Rybinsk. There, taking refuge from sudden rain, I entered a large 'traktîr,' and drank tchai as a stimulus to persevering efforts on the *Rùsskoye-Slòvo*. Around me peasants, strangely enough wearing very short hair, sat at tables and enjoyed the reverberant strains of a large mechanical organ, one of whose frequent resources was a loud clash of cymbals. The landlady, leaving an active husband to dispense cold sausage or salted herrings or 'agoùrtsi' from behind a counter, placed her own little teapot at a table near me, and, when not looking after a young son's needs, respectfully stared. Then, to lighten a dull moment, I confessed myself an Anglitchàneen, to which statement she responded by turning up her eyes and venturing interrogatively, "Nyè Nyèmetz?" First, as is not unusual in such places, a beggar-man entered, and, making a rapid progress, levied alms. But soon every one pressed swiftly to a broad veranda

Through Russia in War-time

(the room being upstairs) to witness a large company of recruits marching through the street to the clearly marked notes of their loud, monotonous singing. Each wore a thick blue pea-jacket besides the invariable peaked cap, dark trousers, and top-boots, and carried upon his back a small wooden box or, exceptionally, a bundle. Arriving at the station, I found these young men drawn up and patiently waiting in a double line, or entraining into wagons rudely fitted up with plank seats. Meanwhile, mothers and sisters or sweethearts wept or fluttered their handkerchiefs. The God of War wavered not in his demands, and Russia shrank not from appeasing them.

Now off to Petrograd, through forests of birch and giant spruce firs, often intermingled; again over level crossings, whose gates are kept by barefooted women holding the staff; into cooler regions, where train conductors wear once more a black cloth costume consisting of a tight coat with full skirts and large trousers tucked into shining boots. A Moscow merchant on board was somewhat similarly, but much more handsomely, dressed in blue, this style of attire being popular among such of the wealthy 'kòoptsy' as encourage a national style. I chatted with a schoolgirl who, with companions and a teacher, was returning to Petrograd after taking refuge afar from the summer heat of the city. My reasoned belief is that the Russians have a definite facility in languages, apart from the frequently enjoyed advantage of early instruc-

Kazan and Nizhni Novgorod

tion. Here, for instance, was a child of fourteen who, having taken lessons for six months, could speak English fluently. As the train, on this fine afternoon, neared the capital, the stations became increasingly crowded with peasants, among whom noticeably the men, the women, and the children liked to collect, together separately. Authority was represented, as usual, by one or two gendarmes, but I saw no disorder requiring their services on this or any other occasion.

CHAPTER XXI

PETROGRAD AGAIN

ARRIVING at Petrograd, I had a serious task on hand, one which, taxing the resources of my will to the full, could arouse within me a passing lively mood of annoyance mingled with merriment. It was in this wise. When, blithesome because on adventure bent, I departed southward from the capital, I pondered how to dispose of certain bulky effects. They must go into 'khranènie,' or 'safe keeping'—that is, the baggage department of the railway-station. Upon my return I had to recover them, and won forthwith an easy preliminary victory. The intelligent 'nosèelshcheek' disappeared with my voucher, and returned in less than five minutes with a statement of the amount to be paid (small indeed, a rouble and a half for the care of two trunks during eleven weeks), and received his reward. My possessions would be delivered to me in the 'old' station, and thither I set forth, accompanied by hand baggage, in a dròschky. The isvòshchik, who had been shown the ticket, started confidently, and for a while did not

Petrograd Again

falter. Then he asked to see the paper a second time, and spelt out a name; next he went on, but once more stopped to examine the writing, and again proceeded a short distance. To a certain extent he understood what I said, but in no degree, or truly a very small one, could I understand him. So we advanced in continually less effective spurts, now making excursions into by-streets, now retracing our steps toward the starting-point of the expedition. I fear that I shouted to the man, and cannot look back on my bearing as exemplary; my soul is perturbed when I think of it. Assuredly, while far less calm than when once on a snowy surface I seemed sliding to death at the bottom of a ravine in Switzerland, I again experienced an uncanny sense of the humorous along with the humiliation of impotence. In desperation I took my hand baggage from the dròschky and looked for another in which to return to the terminus, because the isvòshchik had set his opinion too boldly against mine. But no other vehicle was in view. So, crushed by circumstances, I surrendered, and in a very short time found myself before the entrance gates of a goods station. Another victory! But farther on a soldier at a barrier could not imagine why I should arrive with two pieces of luggage. The isvòshchik's sulky and scanty utterances were ineffective, but in the course of time the sentry capitulated. Next, passing many warehouses, we drew up where a porter showed a countenance

Through Russia in War-time

not definitely hostile. A little gift of fifteen kopecks seemed advisable. "Gdyè kontòra?" I asked, wishing to find an office. "Na lyèvo!" he replied, and to the left I went a long way through sheds half full of packing-cases. Returning after a fruitless quest, I was forced to reveal my helplessness to this man, who, as we approached a little counting-house, called out excitedly several times: "He cannot speak Russian!" Now followed an unprofitable direction to penetrate mazes on the right. In desperation I found another porter, who, receiving twenty kopecks, led me at once to a large office near the gates, at the very entrance of the station. Showing my authorization to a clerk of satisfactory appearance, I heard a laconic "Zàftra!" "But I have a dròschky waiting now," was the expostulation which, in some sort of Russian equivalent, issued from my faltering lips, as I thought, aghast, of all my recent trying experiences. "Zàftra!" was the second and final, as it had been the first, word in reply. So on the morrow I was destined to try again. Perhaps 'twas right, for Sunday should be a *dies non* in business. Driving off, I chose near the Nicolàevski station a large and convenient hotel, which, bearing the same name as, is somewhat superior to the Gostìnnitza I patronized three and thirty years ago. On that occasion a servant in high boots and very full black velvet knickerbockers and a red shirt showed me a room, where I anticipated sound slumbers after a journey from the West of nearly

Petrograd Again

three days and two nights. Therefore, while its small hand pointed to six o'clock in the evening, I moved a finger round the dial of my watch to indicate that the hour of rousing should be seven on the following morning. But, after exactly an hour, the faithful creature carried out his task! In those days a Nèvsky of lower skyline contained fewer lofty buildings and less wealth of gleaming stone than in our time adorn Petrograd's chief street. A show of very realistic waxworks here delighted the moujiks, who congregated also in a large 'traktir' remarkable for a magnificent organ. Any one who, wishing to observe the peasants, entered this place of refreshment from a frosty atmosphere without, if he wore glasses, found them ineffective for several minutes, since the condensation of vapour resulting from the difference of temperature within was great.

In the autumn of 1915 prices ruled high in hotels. I suppose an excess of visitors had arrived from stricken Poland. Eight and a half roubles were asked me for a room, though by good fortune I found one at a lower figure. No picturesque costume now enlivened the scene, for Petrograd grows surely more like the West, and less true to old Russian ways.

A second effort to obtain my trunks should have been made under improved auspices. The porter at the hotel carefully instructed a youthful isvòshchik whither to proceed. But the good lad drove me to some offices at the rear of the

Through Russia in War-time

neighbouring passenger arrival station, and could be induced neither by verbal entreaty nor animated gestures to go anywhere else. Withholding all reward because of his recalcitrance, I entered another conveyance belonging to a driver of purple face and small reddish eyes. Carefully, on my return from the previous visit, I had made a mental note as to the direction which would lead with swiftness and infallibility to the goods depot. But lamentable failure threatened the second undertaking as it had afflicted the first. However, the isvòshchik, into whose nature I searched in my predicament with anxious gaze, showed resource. He suggested an appeal to a 'gorodovòi,' or policeman, who promptly increased the debt I owe his class. Urbane, though immobile of face, the guardian of the peace directed us so that soon we were driving along gaily. Having reached the office, I was led at once through a gateway and across yards to see opened a heavily padlocked warehouse door. My effects were dusty but intact, and engirdled by string, secured by leaden tokens. A porter swiftly offered his brawny back for the burden, and completed a demonstration of Russian efficiency.

It was my intention to visit Finland on the way homeward. Nourishing a hope of further and truer knowledge which should be acquired at a later date, I would now quit this vast experiment of Nature in welding together races, leave for a while civilization in the making,



A MOUJIK. PETROGRAD.

To face p. 276.



Petrograd Again

fully resolved to cast at a later date my eyes again on Russia, the country of vastness and brave emergence from difficulties. As my sojourn among the Finns might amount to ten days or a fortnight, I thought it would give me ample opportunity to get permission to leave the Empire. The period of delay in obtaining my papers would, I thought, be best spent in new regions. But, to the end of time, travellers with insufficient knowledge will blunder. I failed to understand that Tornea, a town on the dividing line between Finland and Sweden, is not the only frontier, consequently I was much surprised to find myself and my belongings hailed before Customs authorities, when at a distance not fifty versts from Petrograd. The resulting experience may have been no more troublesome than that of many another travelling Briton. In war-time special care must be exercised. All papers, postcards, letters, diaries, negatives, prints, and two faithful cameras were segregated on a counter, and declared forfeit. The dread sentence stirred me to what was intended for eloquence. My pictures were precious, for had not a vague idea lately entered my mind that notes and photographs should play their part in a modest volume aiming to increase English readers' knowledge of Russia? So I pleaded, as a mother might for her young. Fortunately there were no sentries about with fixed bayonets to play havoc with my equanimity. The prosecution rested in the hands of an honourable 'Old Bailey' practitioner tolerably

Through Russia in War-time

versed in French, not a soft man or an inexperienced, and by profession a 'prèestav,' or inspector. Divertingly sarcastic, he evinced by innuendo that his opinion of me was unfavourable. Which hotel did I intend to visit at Viborg? Of course, the X! That might be expected. What would be my route in Sweden? Exactly! He appeared to be dominated by a demon of distrust. This man had great influence with 'the Bench,' represented by a uniformed officer, who read my English correspondence, and was distinguished by a calm and watchful bearing. As the train still waited to proceed, an important decision ere long reached me. I was at liberty to proceed in it, or, if I preferred to stay during a space of three hours in the 'booffyèt, some form of reprieve concerning my sequestered property might be vouchsafed as a special favour. Clearly I had done wrong, but a higher authority might view my case leniently. The ordeal by waiting, which extended somewhat longer than the duration foretold, was softened by the opportunity it afforded to observe travellers in batches hastily seeking refreshment; moreover the monotony was broken by the demeanour of the staff, which was amusingly different according as idleness or activity prevailed. At last a gendarme summoned me to a small room where, entering a more genial atmosphere than had hitherto prevailed, I filled up a declaration. Alas! certain particulars necessitated that I should return to Petrograd and observe several formalities. Here Mr. Inspector

Petrograd Again

was very precise. Evidently anxious that I should commit no mistake, he set me to write on a piece of paper three items, while in a tight tunic he puffed and groaned under a load of care; and his directions must be observed in a particular order. My nationality was in my favour. I went back by request to the same hotel in the capital, and set to work the next morning. The first task, which consumed but two days, was carried out with the assistance of the hotel functionary who has charge of the passports. Then I could turn to the second, which took me to a great Government office. Here I came into momentary contact with a phase of the bureaucracy playing so important a part in the Russian Empire. In a large room filled with separate tables, at which sat clerks, some at least of them of the type called by us first-class Civil Servants, an official acceded so graciously to my request for dispatch, that in a very few hours I possessed a needed permission. To the third authority I bore in a large sealed envelope portions of my property, as given to me at the frontier. Force, in union with high-bred courtesy, reigned in this Imperial establishment. A young officer, who listened to my statement, gently intimated that I had yet to suggest precisely what he could do for me; but, when an omission was rectified, he encouragingly assured me that in two or three days a communication should be sent. Next day at noon a knock sounded at my door in the hotel. A

Through Russia in War-time

messenger handed me a large packet carrying the seal of a great and formidable department of State. Each of Mr. Inspector's three requirements had now been faithfully carried out, so in buoyant spirits I soon quitted the capital.

CHAPTER XXII

FINLAND

VIBORG, in its way the most interesting town of Finland, is eighty miles from Petrograd. I had found in Russia a remarkable absence of mediaeval castles, for though there exist, at Moscow, Kazàn, Nìzhni-Nòvgorod, and other ancient cities, kremlins surrounded by surprisingly high walls, terminating in crenellated Moorish battlements, the country is devoid of such strong places as were long held by the barons in England and the seigneurs in France. It is true that many a wall-enclosed monastery like the Sìmonov, on the Moskvà, could better resist a siege than any ecclesiastical institution in the older countries of Europe, if possibly exception be made of certain special triumphs of Italian church defence as at Assisi. But Viborg is dominated by an old castle of impressive aspect, having a lofty octagonal structure comparable with a French *donjon*, though it culminates in a high roof of the curved shape often seen on Russian belfries, while adjoining it stands a tower of the square form common in the West. A wide sea-water moat surrounds the stronghold, that from its situation, at the

Through Russia in War-time

entrance to the harbour, must have possessed additional strategic importance. The market-place boasts a round fort, nicknamed 'Fat Catherine,' which, though crowned by a roof in shape not unlike a spiked helmet, might well have suggested our Martello towers. As for the general style of the town, whose history recalls the names of Torkel Knutson, and Eric Alexsonn Tott, early protagonists of Swedish domination, it is bright and attractive. Not only is there a private and strikingly beautiful country seat, with extensive water vistas, in the immediate neighbourhood; but at Imatra Falls, situated within a two or three hours' railway journey, is to be seen a rushing flood or cataract which, now as in past ages, ever deeper cleaving its way through granite, displays a grandeur the like of which can scarcely be surpassed. 'Iser rolling rapidly' at Munich suggests but faintly the force and volume and life of this torrent, and not at all its lone magnificence. Above the long stretch of dashing, tumbling, foaming waters, which with mad fury announce their will in the presence of resisting rock and silent trees, stretches a huge lake covered by crested waves washing low, birch-laden shores, while, below the rapids, lies a nearly placid pool lined by broken stones and tall, leafy gleaming stems. The visitor may here amuse himself, when sated with the sublime, by observing, in a small eddy, some derelict piece of wood. So still is the buffeted particle under the play of strange and almost exactly co-ordinated impulses,

Finland

that investigation of its potential freedom seems invited. Perhaps after prolonged observation of the tiny whirlpool, the wanderer muses irrelevantly on diverse things, till recalled to the practical by habits of active thought. Becoming, after dreamy communication with Nature in an enchanting spot, once again of everyday mood, he directs his mind, it may be, to some comely and delightful travelling acquaintance, or to an unknown financier doubtless triumphant and happy when erecting a great hotel in familiar contiguity with this transcendent revelation of Nature and Cosmic power !

Travelling through Finland, generally by day, first from east to west and then from north to south, I was enabled to form some notion of its claims to natural beauty. The outward manifestation of earth's wonders in this country, as to me vouchsafed, had a certain sameness. I saw skies uniformly grey or blue : a flat landscape having as distinguishing features lakes of moderate size and irregular outline, bounded by extensive forests, whose trees, chiefly pines, were never gigantic and seldom extremely picturesque, small meadows and farms, and neat, simple wooden houses painted dark red.

Energetic, courageous, and well to do seems Helsingfors, which, containing some impressive old-fashioned buildings, has constructed others altogether novel. Hence, as the visitor walks abroad in certain directions, he prepares in self-defence for fresh developments, becomes, when

Through Russia in War-time

his eyes are about to fall on a fresh façade, almost morbidly expectant of surprises. Original groupings and dispositions of piers and lights and columns, strange roofs, massive effects meet the gaze. As for the harbour and broken shores, they are so lovely, and withal busy, that they cannot well fade from memory. On a Sunday afternoon, when I visited an island laid out in good taste as a home for most of the animals usually represented in a zoological gardens, a special event enhanced my satisfaction. Perhaps a score of small yachts, with two or three white sails, covering a course, doubled in the land-locked waters ; while I could see, outside the port, at a distance, the mighty wave-lapped fortress, Sveaborg, unsuccessfully bombarded by the English and French during the Crimean War.

Though, naturally enough, regretting to leave pleasant Helsingfors, I found, after a few hours' journey, some compensating interest in the former capital, Abo. The town is of considerable size and well laid out, but lacks movement and life. However, it possesses two buildings of importance. If anything could express a solid, uncompromising spirit, it is the Slott, or hoary castle of Abo. One is almost struck dumb by the dreary monotony of its two long, parallel, factory-roofed portions, which, adjoining one another, are surmounted at either end by squat towers covered in the manner of cathedrals patiently waiting a spire. The bare white walls have a few square windows

Finland

high up their sides ; and a completely disturbing effect is increased by gaunt, unrelenting extensions at one extremity. This ancient stronghold, being under repair, did not allow of thorough investigation, but disclosed immensely thick walls, winding staircases, and floors supported by worm-eaten oak beams, such as also roof over the usual large hall and many lesser apartments. In a small adjacent building, which dates from the time of Gustavus Vasa, is a highly interesting historical museum. It were ungracious to depreciate what is plain and downright because of inelegance ; yet, as I contemplated the main rude specimen of castle construction, I read in it results of Nature's harsh conditions. To any one reflecting on European civilization, a slow and gloomy far-Northern development but throws into relief the early established artistic feeling and joyous impulses of the South. Clearly, in Western countries knowing Latin influences, the harmonious architectural manifestations of feudal virility surpass the crude expression of untutored might in far-off Finland. The red-brick Domkyrka, or Cathedral, is notable for a very massive square tower, surmounted by a blunt-pointed steeple, and pierced by several rows, one above the other, of simple romanesque windows. Unfortunately, as the sacristan had lately changed his dwelling and was not easily found, I could not visit the interior.

In Finland, as everywhere during the battle of progress, commerce becomes an increasingly

Through Russia in War-time

decisive factor, and it was well to pass a few hours at Tammerfors, a lively and prosperous industrial centre, conveying, like the other places, a notion of prevalent comfort. Many quiet girl students, wearing white caps with black velvet bands, were to be seen. The mills were founded in the last century by two Scots, doubtless influenced by the cheapness of labour—that is, if one may judge from the economic motive which, as explained to me, governs several Englishmen who establish factories on the Continent. The peasant and general population of this little country differ in features from the Great Russians, inasmuch as the face is less ruddy, the nose not so thick, and the forehead high and large. The eyes, certainly somewhat small, are apt to slant in Tatar fashion. To speak generally, the countenances impressed me as those of a race that, having long battled against rigorous conditions of soil and weather, and known gloom and despondency, had yet with ceaseless valour struggled, through the course of many generations, to improved conditions of life. A direct manner of address and simple, genuine warmth are noticeable in social intercourse, but the people are not vivacious. In the towns, so far as I could judge, solid well-being and development of the arts form active ideals.

The present appeared a favourable opportunity to gain a glimpse of Laplanders, though inquiries in Petrograd and Helsingfors, which is

Finland

a great centre for touring, had brought me little encouragement. At first I was thoroughly balked in my endeavour, as will immediately appear. To reach Rovaniemi, the northernmost point of the Finnish railway system, it was necessary to sleep at Kèmi, where a failure on the part of everybody to understand my object did not surprise me, since an Englishman's love of travel is incomprehensible to most subjects of the Tsar. The inn was full, but after supper a girl, carrying a lantern, led me to a house where, by passing through the kitchen, I reached a not uncomfortable chamber, as to which, however, I at first experienced doubts, because the wooden bedstead, being built on a telescopic principle, was much contracted, and its capacity for extension did not at once reveal itself to an unimaginative mind. Next day, by a train that moved at the rate of fifteen miles per hour, I reached my destination, situated just within the Arctic circle. As for the country passed through, at first there were Christmas-trees and primitive dark grey log-houses with châlet-like barns to match them. Then came an undulating wilderness of broken granite, sparsely covered by scrubby birch-trees, already yellow-leaved in late September. It became necessary to explain my purpose at Rovaniemi station to the gendarme in charge, who examined every one's passport and my luggage carefully; nor did he seem to regard me favourably, being doubtless unable to decipher my papers. By dint of persevering inquiries at

Through Russia in War-time

the inn I learned that fully fourteen days might be consumed in a successful expedition to a Laplanders' camp; so that the nature of the undertaking, however feasible, did not recommend itself. A good deal disappointed, I set out for a walk; and now to a mind chastened in the matter of scenery came unexpected delight. Standing on the right bank of the Kemijoki, I looked down on its broad stream as it curved round a great tree-covered hill in front of me. Such is Ounasvaàra, from whose summit, seven hundred feet high, the midnight sun can be seen during ten days in June. A diminutive steamer ere long hove in sight and came up to a little quay, where I gathered that she makes a six hours' trip up the river. The village of scattered wooden houses boasts a bank, chancing to enter which I was told by a genial manager I could best get in touch with the race of little aborigines by journeying to a certain district of Arctic Sweden. Bewailing my lost time, next day I returned to Kèmi, and forthwith proceeded to Tornea, the frontier town.

Having, on account of the Rovanièmi excursion, come by an unusual train, I was the only through traveller, consequently received liberal attention from the Custom House officials. The examination was thorough, and lasted perhaps an hour. Once more it became necessary to battle for precious negatives, films, and rolls. Not quite liking to see unopened and un-exposed material thrown away, I announced in

Finland

Russian that such and such film packs were 'nòvy,' or 'new.' Whereupon an unsympathetic gendarme solemnly asked, "What is 'new'?" a Socratic form of investigation with which I could not cope. But, with sardonic humour, he added he supposed 'new' was not 'old,' a speculation so much to his taste that he uttered it at least as often as I asserted that anything was new. After a while a superior appeared, who, with ability to speak French, displayed a reassuring and not ungenial disposition. When all spoils from my belongings had been set aside with view to a later investigation, I was searched in a considerate manner, and requested to attend at eleven on the following morning. Meantime, as the hotel was full, an apartment in a private house would be shown me. Issuing from the station in the dark, I was about to walk into the river until taken in hand and shown how to cross by the ferry to Tornea. Numerous lights shining from opposite, over the narrow stretch of water, inspired an effective scene, and altogether the incident was delightful. My lodging lay near, and consisted of a large sitting-room in the dwelling of a Norwegian possessing some command of English. His young daughter in a few minutes converted a particularly fine box couch into a bed, where I passed a comfortable night, in the course of which I became aware that the door of a communicating chamber was noiselessly and momentarily opened. Next morning a stroll made me acquainted with this

Through Russia in War-time

singularly calm and peaceful little town, composed of clean, white or tinted, separate wooden houses. In an atmosphere not only sunny but crisp, a walk through the comparatively spacious street, where grass grew at intervals, proved agreeable. Coming successively on the white weather-board 'societatshuis,' or hotel, and a new Red Cross Hospital, I reached the church, which stands forth clearly on a slight eminence. Its little sharp-pointed steeple is covered prettily with dark tiles, but the immediate surroundings pleased me even more, since the simple graves possess an unusually leafy setting: among birch and poplar and mountain ash the dead lie, each, as it were, in a wood. Crossing the water again by the ferry, I had time to pass along a country road. Here an untidy soldier, whom I chanced to meet, having asked the time and adjusted the hands of his watch, affably volunteered that it was American, extremely good, and acquired at a cost of only seven roubles. Congratulating him on possessing a treasure, I made for the Customs House at the railway-station. Soon the day's train, having arrived from Petrograd, disgorged, as might be expected at such a frontier, passengers of varying nationality, and then, certain doors being opened, priority was given my case by the uniformed officer who sat behind a table with a clerk. Standing amid a throng, I answered questions and tried to shepherd my property. While any undeveloped film was forthwith confiscate, every negative underwent careful scrutiny.

Finland

How I rejoiced that, obeying a sudden premonition at Abo, I had goaded an amiable photographer there to make strenuous efforts for me in his dark-room! Yet I reflected that if, by a supreme exercise of sagacity and restraint I had forbore to open my sealed packet on entering Finland, I should have done well. Meantime, at the officer's request, a linguistic genius who stood near satisfied himself that my correspondence and notebooks were innocuous. At last even the picture postcards were done with; whereupon, having lost little, I collected my scattered goods with a gendarme's help, and felt that I had been treated fairly and justly. At a barrier on a pier, passports were expeditiously restored to their owners, who could then embark in a small steamer for Harparanda, where, at the Stadt's Hotel, all very gladly partook of a meal, and, whether Armenian, French, American, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, or British, congratulated themselves on having covered a considerable portion of a long journey. At such a moment the veil of reserve is lifted, there is a comparison of views, an interchange of opinions; even a mutual interest springs up. How foreigners have of necessity taken a deep interest in international politics! Here a huge country geographically unfavoured would be bettered through acquisition of a fresh outlet; and here a small one, fearing to lose its independence, looks to a powerful neighbour for protection. Here a newly formed Government, seeing in the exigencies of rival

Through Russia in War-time

Powers an opportunity for aggrandizement, wishes to absorb territory whose inhabitants speak a like language. A strongly marked interior policy of a State, a surpassing wish for external domination, active prejudices against a creed, an obstinate dislike to intellectual freedom, a suddenly increased tariff hostility, a burning resolve to resist outside aggression—one or other of these has frequently agitated the hearts of continental folk, and given to existence an extra reality which Englishmen till lately have been able to seek in the thrills of sport, the pursuit of wealth, or professional specialization.

Having spent so many nights in Russian sleeping berths, I was not sorry to doze in a corner on my way to a junction with a line to Abisko, where Lapps were reported. Opposite me sat a Dutchman, dominated by a strange and not unentertaining form of hilarity. Continuously welled up in his memory a vivid recollection of struggles with the language in Petrograd; indeed, the poor fellow was moved to childish exuberance by recollection of two potent Russian words. Repeating them often, he beamed or laughed till his cheeks glistened with tears. "Nyè ponyemàyoo" ("I do not understand"), such had been his help and support through many troubles in Petrograd! Desisting momentarily from gloating over his talismanic phrase, he began to whistle operatic airs with a good deal of skill. Alas! the old shibboleth must again be honoured, and as moreover he was one of those terrible persons

Finland

who lure you to avow falsely that you gather their meaning in conversation, I closed my eyes and very soon had the satisfaction of seeing the Hollander fall asleep after faintly muttering, "Nyè ponyemàyoo" several times. He was leaving Russia because the cost of living in the capital during war-time had become prohibitive. A different reason swayed other occupants of the compartment, a lady and her husband, a French gentleman, who was a chemical expert in an important enterprise, to bid farewell to Moscow, after a long residence there. He spoke sorrowfully of his two boys, concerning whom no news had come to hand during the past six months, and they were at school in a part of France held by the enemy! I learnt that Russian workmen are industrious in youth, but then, for a few years, prone to idleness, after which period they revert to steady toil; also that, since the war, dearth of labour and consequent high wages have tended to demoralize them. My acquaintance did not praise the heads of the manufactories, remarking that they tolerate the presence of operatives in an inebriated condition, which lenience has a subversive effect on discipline. He described the land as one of very rich folk and very poor, and was impressed by the energy of the progressive party in politics. Good education apparently is costly in Russia, and now, if these troubled parents could but find their children, they would make a fresh start in life and a new bid for happiness in France.

Through Russia in War-time

As to my own opinion, Russia, a land of enigmas, is in a condition of such active evolution, that it must long fascinate those loving to study man's development. After hearing a Customs official say, when finding books among my effects, "We want no books here!" I have met an English-speaking minister of religion who, to my astonishment, reported a condition of tolerance for mild propaganda, and this in a country extraordinarily jealous for the power of the State Church! Some persons recalling the rigour exercised by the Russian authorities, when faced with the insurrectionary movement of ten years ago, are apt to misjudge the national character. There has been, and will continue, a violent conflict of ideas between the party of progress and that of reaction, and it is in the nature of things that harshness will occur while time and effort work out salvation. But it is foolish to judge this great Empire as if it were France or England of to-day, and unfair to forget either our own barbarous criminal code of a century since or the treatment often meted out to the masses in Western countries before that time. A trifling incident related to me on this journey by a man of business shows the kindly side of those in authority. My informant dealt with the yield of a large industry which need not be specified, but times had been unpropitious, and he was able to look forward to, rather than back upon, success. It was a serious crisis in his affairs, but a senior functionary, satisfied

Finland

as to the truth, said to him, "Since it is not convenient for you to comply with ordinary requirements, I will overlook the irregularity, but please place a rouble in the Red Cross box." A doubly Christian spirit!

CHAPTER XXIII

LAPPS

ENTERING at Boden a train for Kiruna, where I hoped to get a glimpse of some Lapps, I observed little traffic. Everywhere the officials were kind and helpful. The line passes through Arctic regions to important iron mines on the Malmberg Mountain, and later reaches the far Norwegian port Narvik. Pleasant scenery occurs at Gellivàra, but beyond comes rather stony forest, where the landscape grows hilly and desolate and dwarf birches abound. Alighting at Kiruna, a place which, having been lately desert, is already more than a village, for a seam of iron ore is now worked in the neighbourhood, I stepped into the streets. What a strange sight enchanted me! A little creature in red and blue, a veritable gnome, moved lightly along in tight breeches and moccasins and a blue tunic, trimmed with red, and drawn in at the hips. His tasselled, blue, and very full cap had a peak. Beneath the tunic was another garment visible at throat and wrists. Pursuing the apparition, I offered it money, showed my camera, but evoked nothing beyond a refusal conveyed

University of
California



A LAPPO WOMAN. JUKASJÄRVI.

To face p. 297.

Lapps

by a sideway shake of the head. Descending the hill, I became conscious of a gentle foot-fall in tentative pursuit, but no other sound, till at last this mild human creature, darting forward, drew almost level with me, nevertheless stayed across the road. I could punish no more, so came to terms, and obtained a record of my first Laplander, standing humbly with downcast eyes.

Next, hiring a carriole, I drove ten miles to Jukasjärvi and, arriving on the shore of a long lake, was rowed across by a fair-haired man named Ericsson to a scattered and secluded settlement of log huts inhabited by fishermen. The surroundings were beautiful in an unusual way, for low, snow-covered mountains, at some distance from flat shores, combined with perfect smoothness of the water's surface, a clear, sunny atmosphere, and a temperature neither hot nor cold, to convey a sense of subdued restfulness, and to reveal Nature in a mood of weird calmness. My driver, who had fastened his horse to a post on the other side of the lake, led me for a minute into a comfortable house, leaving which I caught sight of two Lapps hoeing in a tiny cultivation patch. Both fled at my approach and, uttering shrieks of exaggerated alarm, took refuge in a dwelling. When discovered, the woman, who was seventy years of age, remained wild and frightened, and wondered when I placed in her hand a small piece of silver. Reindeer-skin garments and a blue cap, carried jauntily,

Through Russia in War-time

gave her a remarkable look. Apart from the houses stood a diminutive wooden church, quaintly primitive, and possessing a detached belfry painted alternately red and white in broad divisions. The church register contains the names of several distinguished persons who came here at different times in the eighteenth and even seventeenth centuries. On the return journey, through unenclosed and nearly level forest, I kept a sharp look-out for a Lapp's wigwam, of which I had earlier caught a glimpse. Through birch and pine trees peeped the tops of inclined poles, forming the framework of a tent, and leaving an upper orifice for the escape of smoke. So, sending the carriole to Kiruna, I approached and peered within the wigwam. Emptiness reigned there except for some skins on the ground and two or three insignificant heaps, one of which stirred. Then a good-sized black and white bitch raised her head languidly and showed me her litter. Not far away I found a neatly built miniature wooden hut, furnished with a low entrance, beside which lay heaped up high the droppings of animals larger than sheep. Leaving, I walked along the road and entered a roadside café, where a Swedish sailor boy aged seventeen, sat within. He knew some English, and said he was going to London soon, "for business." Prevailed on without difficulty to come with me to the Lapps' home, he stated that the little neighbouring stable was large enough for ten reindeer. Two men, absent

Lapps

cutting down trees, and a woman inhabited the wigwam. Catarina, aged sixty, but active and bright, had returned in my absence, and now stepped forth. Receiving me easily and with a placid demeanour, she took up one of the four-day-old puppies and placed it in my hand. The youth reported the tent warm in winter, through which season the party continue to live in it. Here, then, was a member of a docile aboriginal race devoid of records, a being without signs of property other than a tent, a few skins, two or three pots and pans, a dog and reindeer. Having come into contact with these interesting fellow-creatures, who are little better than intelligent and peaceable savages, I wished to see more of them.

The unpretentious inn at Kiruna forms part of the railway-station, and as in the restaurant some German tourists were at table, I took a seat a little way off. Next morning, a middle-aged member of the party greeted me politely in the hall and, having deplored in tones of genuine feeling the terrible nature of the war, asked for news of Petrograd, to receive from me a most guarded answer. Northward again went the train, at first through moderately wooded regions thinly covered with snow, and then for perhaps thirty miles in sunshine and under a blue sky, along a lake, on the opposite side of which rose a considerable white-mantled mountain. I descended at a station north of the sixty-eighth parallel, Abisko, where, in the absence

Through Russia in War-time

of town or village, I sought breakfast, a mile or two away, at a small châlet near the edge of Lake Tornea, in beautiful surroundings. Above, and to the west, lay lofty snow-covered slopes, which rose to form in the near distance a level horizon, except where a huge semicircular hollow suggested that a strange being of wondrous size had bitten a piece out of a concealed ridge. Below, and to the east, nestled promontories and islands set in the extensive lake. The rocky ground supported some yellowing birch-trees. At the châlet a hearty welcome was extended me by the guide-landlord, and his wife soon set on the table a collation, including a jug of home-made beer. Then, learning that my quarry would be found near the station, I returned to find a wigwam, much like that at Kiruna, but upon a shelving, stony shore, and looking toward snowy mountains and islets of the lake. The entrance of the tent being closed, I spoke in my friendliest tones, but without result. Then the flap of the wigwam was disturbed for a brief moment and, a woman's face appearing, a growl of remonstrance warned me to expect no welcome. Stillness continued within the dwelling, except for a repetition from time to time of the Lapp woman's heroic effort, which though always rising not unmusically, to a final burst, somehow or other failed to convey the notion of severe displeasure, and certainly did not intimidate. The affair went on until the lady began to peep out for a little longer, when at last, having uncovered the aperture,



A LAPPI WIGWAM. LAKE TORNEA.



Lapps

she stepped out cautiously and directed her dark eyes at me. Quite a small specimen of humanity, she was attired in brown skins with the hair turned inward. With all possible persuasiveness, I hinted my desire to take her portrait, whereupon she grunted disapproval and vanished. Feeling a miserable persecutor, I was about to desist, but suddenly she demanded for the favour half a krone, which sum I placed in her hand. Instantly retreating within her fortress, she shouted defiantly that she must have another half-krone. I agreed, and set the coin upon a stone, but would not let her take it in advance. Now, by a swift transition, she grew gentle, so that, with a few signs and Swedish words, I soon established myself on an amicable footing. Her husband was mysteriously absent, but she invited me graciously within the wigwam, and pointed to a small log as a seat. The framework of the habitation disclosed itself clearly. Inclined birch poles, fastened to an iron ring above, left an exit a foot or two wide for smoke. As for the sides, they consisted of canvas and boards and old iron. The cooking arrangements were capital, for two large and arched pieces of iron supported over the fire a cross-piece, from whose centre now hung by a chain a tiny copper kettle. A cheap American clock and a few small wooden boxes seemed the chief belongings. Presently my hostess asked if she should make me some coffee, and proceeded to do so with muddy water, which I was reassured to reflect

Through Russia in War-time

would be boiled. With a hand not over clean she took out of a tin coffee, destined to undergo purification by heat, and then broke with nippers from a large piece of loaf sugar two or three fragments. While the feast brewed in the kettle, over a deftly fed birch-wood blaze supported by two stones, this good housewife produced two cups and saucers and sat in a kneeling position ; next, having added some milk, she handed me my portion of the refreshment. It was perfect. Two or three young girls entered to pay a visit, and the Lapp woman playfully slapped one of them on the cheek. I now essayed a walk toward the mountains, but the snow made progress impossible through the wilderness of stone and scrub, so I returned to partake with the station hands of soup and fish and home-made beer, at a total charge equivalent to sixpence. When I next sought the tent, though the man had not come, the woman made me welcome, and exhibited some of her possessions. A white ball proved to be, not cheese, but reindeer fat, while large flat elastic discs represented bread. Naturally wishing to buy some mementoes, I obtained several knives in curved reindeer-bone cases, the handiwork of the husband, who had adorned them with varied geometric designs. But on one a clever representation of a reindeer pleased me especially, because it closely resembled designs known to archæologists, and ascribed to cave-dweller workmanship of a period perhaps fifty thousand years ago. Here, then, was a survival





A LAPPI, NEAR LAKE TORNEA.

To face p. 303.

Lapps

of prehistoric art! Suddenly my hostess, removing her cap, took from it a little bag containing black thread. Next, she whipped up a curious bone reticule (ornamented with the figure of a reindeer) that hung at her waist, and drew out a needle, which she asked me to thread. From a little box she took, one by one, small pieces of reindeer skin of different colours and, now biting them together, now trimming them with scissors, made a purse. Meanwhile, after inquiring whether I had children, she alluded with feeling to two young sons whom she had lost. Our intercourse being suddenly aided by a good-natured storekeeper living near by, I learned she could count in 'Swedish' up to several thousand, and that, despite a ruddy face, her age was sixty. Seeking other exact information, I heard that her husband, who bore the name of Kayser, owned thirty reindeer now away in the mountains. The good man, having at last arrived, evinced a friendly disposition. Small, but still active and strong, he was seventy years old, with eyes dark and rather bloodshot, and upon his chin a sparse pointed black beard. Moccasins, tight breeches, and a reindeer tunic, having the hair outwards, formed his attire, but he showed me a new furry winter coat and a pair of high boots of incredibly light weight. So far as I could judge, this Lapp was even-tempered and sensible, and lacked both the early excitable asperity and later suavity of his wife. With a really winning impulsiveness, she shook

Through Russia in War-time

me warmly by the hand at the moment of departure, and truly I was sorry to see the last of the little pair, representatives of Scandinavian north-land's surviving aborigines, who, following a free and nomadic existence, seem content to live unblest by higher civilization, untorn by ambition, and uncursed by genius for strife.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOMEWARDS

HAVING returned from Abisko to Boden, I followed southward the shore of the Gulf of Bothnia. In succession lakes, rivers, dense and vigorous forests of fir and birch came to view, as also here and there small areas devoted to the cultivation of grain, mostly oats. The people seemed mild and polite, intelligent and moderately prosperous, of rather hatchety features, and tending to spareness. Railway expenses cannot be considered heavy in this part of the world. A ticket for comfortable accommodation in the second class from Abisko to Stockholm, a distance of fifteen hundred kilometres, or a thousand miles, cost but thirty-six krone, the equivalent of two pounds. After quitting the train at Upsala, and inspecting the cathedral and university, I walked to Gama Upsala, famous for three great neighbouring tumuli, in one of which the Swedish monarchs received sepulture. Two or three squadrons of dragoons were manœuvring at the spot, and the under-officer, of whom I asked permission to remain, not only spoke good English, but expressed warm sympathy with the cause of the Allies. Taking

Through Russia in War-time

advantage of custom, I drank mead near the spot where the kings until the time of, and including, the great Gustavus Adolphus were accustomed to address their subjects. Stockholm stands in a unique position, around several small islands or upon heights overlooking the water. The city was not only gay with a fête, but filled with young people in many-coloured and famous national costumes. Attending two performances at the opera-house, said to be largely supported by the Sovereign, I found at the first the audience, collected to see "Carmen," was scarcely visible; at the second, to witness "Tannhäuser," it filled the building. Sunday afternoon affords, of course, a good opportunity for citizens to relax from the week's cares, and the children were enjoying at that time the circus. Nearing Christiania, I conversed in the train with a German-American who had spent fifteen years in the United States. Our subject becoming soon the ethics of the War, it was a horrible revelation to hear from him, in English, a naked and unashamed doctrine that national need knows no law, and acquirement of control over a country is on the same level whether it be by economic processes or by force of arms. The question resolved itself into one of the relative nobility of ideals. A bright young Norwegian kindly put me in the way of inspecting cursorily some of the romantic and beautiful surroundings of his capital. Next past lofty mountains and forested shores I journeyed to Bergen, thence to take ship and

Homewards

cross, without incident, a stormy sea to my native land. We saw no hostile sail and escaped the disaster which might have befallen us from a drifting mine. Assuredly it was good to be told that curtains must be drawn over portholes as we ascended the River Tyne to Newcastle, such a regulation conveying the idea of active precaution and vigorous defence. Never had I been so glad to set foot in England, and I could now rejoice in closer knowledge of a generous and warm-hearted people, determined, like ourselves, to resist Teutonic domination and militarism to the uttermost. I recognized that Russia, a young and immense country, boasting already mighty names in literature, science, and art, can confidently rely on, not only her own continuous brilliant development, but the closest sympathetic interest of all who nourish ideals concerning future human welfare.



INDEX

- Abo, 284; the Slott, 284; the Domkyrka, 285
Albanian, an, 135
Alexander II, 51, 77
Alexander III, statue of, 45
Alexandròvsk, in the Kola Peninsula, 26
Alexandròvsk, on the Dneiper, 118
Anañùr, 175
Aràgva, river, 172
Archangel, arrival at, 20; Tròitzki Prospékt, 20; Convent of St. Michael the Archangel, 22; English merchant adventurers at, 23; Tròitzki Cathedral, 25; the resources of, 27; Peter the Great and, 57; Ivàn the Terrible and, 80
Armenians, 16, 153, 176, 185

Bàkchee Serài, 131; the Khan-serai, 133
Bakù, journey to, 188; history of, 192; Khan's palace, remains of, 193; street scenes, 193; naphtha industry, 195
Bàlda, the Kalmuck camp, 218
Balta, 149
Beliefs, strange, 35, 157, 259
Bespopòvsty, the, 90

Camels, 230, 232, 237, 242
- Catherine the Great, a comparison with Queen Elizabeth, 47, 97, 118
Caucasus, 146 seq.
Cherson, 117; John Howard's house, 117; statue of Potemkin, 118
Christianity introduced into Russia, 72
Churches, 22, 23, 25, 49, 50, 51, 55, 75, 89, 106, 115, 145
Cinemas, 34, 64, 147
Clergy, the, 96, 97, 173
Cobbler, visit to a, 37, 204
Contents, table of, 9
Cossacks, the, 67, 120, 144, 239, 240
Crimea, 121; Sebastòpol, 122; Inkerman, 123; Yalta, 126; Gurzùf, 129; Alùshta, 130; Simferòpol, 131, 134; Bàkchee Serai, 131, 132, 133
Customs, difficulties at the, 277, 288

Dancing, 99, 147
Daryàl Gorge, 154
Departure from Brooklyn, 13
Derbènt, journey to, 197; history of, 199; the citadel, 199
Dissenters, 90
Dneiper, journey up the, 197
Dvinà, river, 18

Index

- Ekaterina, 26
Ekaterinaberg, 145
England, Russian interest in, 59
English merchant adventurers, 25
"Evræ" or Jews, 119, 138, 247
- Fair, a, 93
Finland scenery, 283, 288
Friendliness, Russian, 66, 136, 176, 185, 187
Funeral processions, 60, 103
- Gama Upsala, 305
Gellivåra, 296
Georgian Military Road, the, 148 *seq.*
German colony, a, 231
German influence, 234-6
Ghenghis Khan, invasion of, 72
Godunòv, Borís, 81, 95
Golden Horde, the, 222
Goud, the legend of, 168
Gudàur, 168
Guinib, 202
Gurzuf, 129
- Hefsours, the, 174
Helsingfors, 283, 284
Hermitage, the, 53
Historical Museum, the, 85
Horsey, Sir Jerome, 24
Howard, John, 117
- Iberian Madonna, the, custom relative to, 70
Iceland, 16
Ikonostas, 50, 55, 75, 89, 106
Ikòns, 41, 56, 70, 88, 155, 249
Illustrations, list of, 9
Imatra Falls, 282
Imperial library, the, 48
Inkerman, 123
- Ivàn the Terrible, 38 ; career of, 79 ; cruelty of, 80
- Jews or "Evræ," 119, 138, 247
Jukasjärvi, 297
- Kalmuck fishermen, 214
Kalmucks, visit to, at Bálda, 218 ; irruption of, in seventeenth century, 222 ; visit to, at Kalmücki-Bazar, 223
- Kasbèk Mountain, 157, 160
Kasbèk village, 158, 163
Kazàn, journey to, 259 ; the Kremlin, 262 ; the museum, 262 ; Tatar tower, 262 ; I fall under suspicion, 263
Kazàn Cathedral, Petrograd, 49
Kèmi, 287
Kemijoki, river, 288
Kertch, 137 ; view from the "Hill of Mithridates," 137 ; the Tsar Kurgàn, 137
Khan, Baty, 222
Khan, Ghenghis, 72, 222
Khirghiz, the, 238, 241, 242, 243, 247
Kiev, approach to, 104 ; fine situation of, 105 ; annals of, 105 ; cathedral of St. Sophia, 106 ; the Petchërskaya Lavra, 106 ; The hermits' caves, 108 ; a concert, 109
Kiruna, 296
Klisti, the, 93
Kòbi, 165
Kuban, river, 142, 144
Kumiss, 138
Kurgàns, 85, 137, 139
Kursk, journey to, 101
- Lapps, 296-8, 300-84
Lesghians, a visit to, 206
Liberation of the serfs, 39, 213
Light on summer nights, 27, 65

Index

- Malàkoff, the, 122
Max Müller on languages, 155,
244
Midnight sun, 16, 288
Mir, 37
Mlèti, 171
Molokanye, 93
Mongols, 220
Monks, 50, 108
Moscow, the streets, 69; the Iberian Madonna, 70; the Red Square, 70, 84; Kremlin, 73; Great Bell and tower of Ivàn Veliky, 73; Church of the Redeemer, 74; Oospènsky Sobòr, 75; Tèrem, 76; St. Basil's Cathedral, 78; origin of the Romànov dynasty, 81; Historical Museum, 85; Sunday market, 87; resources of, 88; Novodyevichi Convent, 94; Donskòi Monastery, 95; Simonov Monastery, 96; Foundling Hospital, 97; Sparrow Hills, visit to, 99
Moujiks, customs, beliefs, character and mode of life of, 35, 36, 115, 256
Mtzkhet, 178
Mud baths, 112
- Nevà, river, 52
Nèvsky Prospekt, the, 44, 45
Nikon, 22, 91
Nizhni Nòvgorod, 266; the Yàrmarka, 267; Austrian prisoners, 267
North Cape, 17
- Odessa, journey to, 111; the limàns, 112; a march past, 114
Oospènsky Sobòr, Moscow, 75
Ossetians, 147, 154, 166
Ounasväara, 288
- Passanaur, 173
Patriotic feeling, 30; as elsewhere, frequently, and 114, 236, 251
Peasants, 20, 21, 33, 36, 60, 119, 256, 259
People's Palace, 61
Pèrun, ancient worship, 105
Peter the Great, 56, 57, 58
Petrograd, journey to, 40; engaging an apartment, 41; the founding of, 44; the Nèvsky Prospekt, 44; the Alexander Nèvsky Convent, 45; statue of Alexander III, 45; the Anichkov Palace, 46; Alexander Square and statue of Catherine the Great, 46; the Imperial Library, 48; the Kazàn Cathedral, 49; Church of Expiation, 51; a palatial home for paintings, 51; Alexander Garden, 52; the Hermitage, 53; fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, 54; St. Isaac's Cathedral, 55; statue of Peter the Great, 56; the War, public exhibition of interest in, 59; funerals, 60; people's palace, 61; restaurants and cafés, 64; the islands, 66; reclaiming baggage, 273, 275; a set-back at the Customs, 276-80
Petròvsk, 203
Photography, 65, 184, 200, 242
Physical aspect of the country, 29, 101, 118, 125, 126, 158, 198, 238, 249, 254, 283, 287
Posting, 146 *seq.*
Potemkin, 118
Preface, 5
- Railway travelling, 30, 31, 40, 104, 134, 188
Raskòlniki, the, 91

Index

- Razin, Stenka, 216
Religious observances, 25, 49, 70,
145, 157
Rovaniemi, 287
Russian language, 42; order of
rank, 211; people, origin of, 71
- Sabuntchi, 194
St. Basil's Cathedral, 78
Sebastopol, 122
Shamyl, 153, 202
Simferopol, 134
Sion, 165
Slavs, beliefs and customs of
ancient, 71
Skoptsi, the, 92
Social progress, 213
Sophia, the Regent, 56, 57, 95
Starovery, the, 92
Steppe, 101, 111, 112, 141
Stockholm, 306
Stryeltzi, 57
Sun, the midnight, 16, 17, 288
Suspicion, under, 254, 258, 263
- Tamàn, 139
Tatars, 64, 130, 243; invasions of,
72; cafés, 129, 133; cemeteries,
134, 199; Crim, 126, 131, 136;
markets, 49, 131, 261; suzer-
ainty of, 261, 263; villages, 129,
130, 204
Terek, river, 153
- Tiflis, 181; resources of, 182; the
Maidan, 183; Botanic Garden,
187
Tornea, 289; lake, 300
Traklirs, 34, 61, 267, 269
Turkic, 244
Tyemròok, 143
Tzilkani, 177
- Upsala, 305
Uralsk, journey to, 229; the
Khirghiz, 237-47; a puzzled
police officer, 243
Urbach, 229; a German colony,
231
- Viborg, 281; castle, 281; park, 282
Villages, 33, 230, 231
Vladikavkaz, 146
Vladimir, 105
Volga, the river, 248-60
Vologda, journey to, 29; a lodg-
ing at, 31; visit to a village, 32,
33; circus, 33; a cobbler's
home, 37
- War, the, 59, 60, 67, 103, 105, 114,
144, 145, 201, 236, 251, 254, 270
Windmills, six-sailed, 33
- Yalta, journey to, 124; situation
of, 126



**HOME USE
CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
MAIN LIBRARY**

This book is due on the last date stamped below.
1-month loans may be renewed by calling 642-3405.
6-month loans may be recharged by bringing books
to Circulation Desk.

Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior
to due date.

**ALL BOOKS ARE SUBJECT TO RECALL 7 DAYS
AFTER DATE CHECKED OUT.**

JAN 6 1975 ¢ -

REC. CIR. JAN 6 '75

LD21—A-40m-5-'74
(R8191L)

**General Library
University of California
Berkeley**

YC 7224

419967

11/26/2

C 6

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

